

BENGAL PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE

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1905 & 1906

This book has been published with a subsidy under the Indo-American Text Book Programme operated by National Book Trust, India.

Published by Mohan Prasadani, Oxford and IBH Publishing Co., 66 Janpath, New Delhi-1, and Printed at Everest Press, 4 Chamelian Road, Delhi-6.

BENGAL PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE

MYMENSINGH SESSION 1905
BARISAL SESSION 1906



OXFORD & IBH PUBLISHING CO.
New Delhi Bombay Calcutta

1956

First Published: 1974 & 1978 (separate volumes)
DEYS Edition (combined in one volume): January 2007

Cover design: Abhijit Nath

Map of the cover is reproduced from the
Sedition Committee Report, 1918
Courtesy: Swapan Majumdar

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

We have been trying sincerely to document the different dimensions of the Anti-Partition movement in Bengal a century ago. After the publication of a huge collection of documents in Bengali, we have now taken up for reissue with correction the proceedings of the Bengal Provincial Conferences of 1905 and 1906 as reconstructed by the late Yatindrakumar Ghosh.

We are greatly indebted to Sri Abhra Ghosh who kindly lent us his personal copies of the previous edition for use as press copies. Sri Nityapriya Ghosh has not only contributed a preface to the present reprint but has also gone through the proofs more than once. We are extremely grateful to him. Sri Sankha Ghosh took keen interest in the publication and his suggestions have helped us to improve the quality of the present edition, we believe. Our sincerest regards to him.

SUDHAGSHU SEKHAR DEY

Preface

Late in the nineteenth century, every district in Bengal used to have its Association and the leading men of the districts considered it a duty and a honour to join these public bodies to raise issues, air grievances and ask the government to pay attention and resolve problems. But these district associations became moribund after the formation of the Indian National Congress (INC) in 1885. The INC stole the limelight, deliberating on national issues and was a more powerful instrument to draw the attention of the government. The district associations lost their usefulness and languished for want of public support.

But soon delegates grew dissatisfied with the deliberations of the Congress. Local issues were not entertained in the Congress sessions because it considered itself a forum for larger and national problems. The Bengal delegates considered the Assam tea workers' sad plight a very important and urgent issue but failed to include it on the agenda of the 1887 Madras session of the Congress. The Bengal newspapers therefore promoted the idea of Provincial Conferences alongside the Congress sessions, where local issues could be discussed. *The Bombay Gazette*, *The Tribune* of Lahore, *Indu Prakash* of Bombay supported the proposal of newspapers of Bengal. That was the reason why the first Bengal Provincial Conference was held in Calcutta in 1888. The last was held in 1940, with only six conferences skipped in between, because of practical inconveniences. Other major provinces used to hold their own Provincial Conferences but none so consistent and popular than the Bengal Provincial Conferences.

Each Conference had its own character and it will be foolish to sum up the deliberations of these nearly fifty conferences. Some were enthusiastic, some routine, some lack-lustre, depending on the political mood of the times. It has been a fashion these days to dismiss the Congress and the Provincial Conferences as an agitation by bhadraloks, of admirable speeches followed by enthusiastic response followed by lethargy and inaction. Aswinikumar Datta (1856-1923), a saintly teacher of Barisal, who was deported in 1908, had himself termed the Congress a three-day *tamasha* at the Congress session at Amarabati in 1897. He did not mean to condemn the Congress but to raise the

agitation beyond speeches. In his presidential speech in the Bengal Provincial Conference in 1913 he mentioned how in 1887 he organised a prayer for elections into the constitution of legislative councils, embodying signatures of forty thousand persons of his district. One day when he was explaining the point, a thoroughly illiterate man came forward and explained the principle to his fellow men in his own terms. That was what Aswinikumar meant by 'work among masses'. Lord Curzon in his 1904 speeches in the districts of East Bengal ridiculed the propaganda that there was a mass movement against the proposal of the Partition of Bengal, and said he knew how the babus of Calcutta organised memorials by a mass, who knew nothing about what they signed. The 1905 Bengal Provincial Conference demonstrated, the Indian newspapers from Calcutta, Madras, Lahore, Bombay and Allahabad said, how peasants after peasants, Hindus and Muslims alike, came upon the rostrum and vowed not to yield to the machinations of the rulers.

What came out of these conferences and resolutions is obvious today. The Parliament in Great Britain, the arbiter of the destiny of India, was little concerned with the conditions of Indians, except the profit expropriated from the colony. A typical instance of the nonchalance was sarcastically mentioned in one of the Calcutta newspapers. When Sir Henry Cotton was debating the Partition of Bengal on the floor of the British parliament, one legislator yawned and asked a fellow legislator what that bloody 'Beher' meant. The fellow legislator confessed that he had not the foggiest idea and the two retired to the smoking room.

Some of the critics of Bengal Provincial Conferences were aware of the fruitlessness of meetings and resolutions. What was the point of resolutions, they asked. Like-minded leaders proposed these resolutions to like-minded countrymen, there were agreements all around and resolutions were forwarded to the government which threw those in waste paper baskets. The critics suggested that all the energy should be mobilised to send delegates to England and make the sensible people there aware of the many atrocities that the Governor-Generals were committing at will. Mass meetings in villages and towns, decrying the maladministration, were a cry in the wilderness unless the right man in the right place could be reached. There were others, however, who insisted that Swaraj was not something that could be attained at one stroke—there needs to be a sustaining endeavour of

leaders and masses over a protracted period of time. While the Congress sessions give us a macro-view of Indian politics, these provincial conferences offer us a micro-view.

Yatindrakumar Ghosh (1912-2002) was not a historian nor an academic. He would have laughed if he heard 'historiography', 'methodology', 'documentation' or terms like that. He loved his village, Banaripara and his district Barisal. The December issues of *The Statesman* in 1905 reported day after day how Gorkha soldiers of the British Raj swooped down on the village Banaripara and the town Barisal because boys and girls, men and women there dared sing and shout *Bande Mataram*, or exhorted people to buy Swadeshi goods. Yatindra was a mere boy then. But he grew up in the village, and engaged himself along with others in the uplift of Banaripara. He did not complete college education but was a popular teacher in the village school and a devoted worker in the build-up of a library. Banaripara was a prosperous village, educated, and had the singular record of a public theatre even before Calcutta could boast of a public theatre. After the Partition of India, he had to leave his village and his country and come down to Calcutta, a refugee. He never took a job, he did not marry, lived on the earnings of his brothers who, being refugees themselves, had to build up a new life. Even then, whatever money he could have scraped out through canvassing school text books was invested in a publishing concern he set up, 'Adhyayan'. But all he published related to his old district Barisal. He became synonymous with Banaripara Sammilani and Barisal Sevasamiti and was welcomed or avoided by his fellow district-men, because his presence meant nagging requests for contributions to those two organisations!

The idea of publishing *Bengal Provincial Conference* occurred to him when he came across the news that Aswinkumar Datta presided over the Dacca Provincial Conference in 1913. Aswini Datta was a demigod to the people of Barisal, as a teacher, a reformer, a writer and and a self-effacing leader of Bengal. Yatindrakumar began his daily visits to the National Library in Calcutta, all on foot from Bowbazar, where he lived in a decrepit house with his brothers, to the Belvedere House at Alipore. Naturally, the first volume prepared by him was the 1913 Provincial Conference. because of its president, Aswinkumar. Kanailal Mukhopadhyay of Firma KL, a friend of his, gave him the encouragement he needed. He went on copying reports of whatever Bengal Provincial Conference he could lay his hands on. Thus came

out the Bengal Provincial Conference held in 1888, 1905, 1906, 1907, 1908, 1913, 1917, 1918, 1918 (Special Session), 1919 and 1928, published not necessarily in that order. The book related to 1913 was the first to be published in 1970. The last was related to 1918 (Special Session) published in 1984. Yatindrakumar had another year's report almost ready and was going through proofs when the roof of the decrepit house—a three-storied building, condemned by Calcutta Corporation and neglected by disputed owners, fell on the head of Yatindrakumar and his brothers, the tenants. They had to leave the house with no means of retrieving their valuables. Yatindra's only valuables were his books, printed and under preparation—those were left in the debris.

A word about the text. There was no problem when the speeches of the President or Chairman of the Reception Committee were given to newspaper reporters. But when they were not, the text was necessarily of the reporters. The English dailies of Calcutta, on one occasion, rued that shorthand writers in Calcutta were not as adept as their colleagues in Madras. *Amrita Bazar Patrika* was proud to inform that it had Jitendralal Banerjee, a gold medalist in M.A. and B.L. to have translated the two-hour long Bengali speech of Chittaranjan Das (the President of 1917 Conference) in just 24 hours. On another occasion when *The Statesman* complimented an observation of a Conference President, there were doubts expressed if the speech was correctly reported—how could a Swadeshi leader find favour with the spokesman of the unsympathetic rulers! Yatindrakumar himself admitted that he was often not able to copy correctly, because of the damaged condition of old newspapers, brittle and torn at places. The microfilm and photocopy were too late to be in operation then—even the 1980s seem today so very distant.

This volume contains the reports of the Bengal Provincial Conferences of 1905 and 1906, the years which saw the apogee of Bengal politics. These were the years of intense public protests against the partition of the Bengal Presidency—believed to have launched for the first time a national movement in India, which gradually climaxed to a demand for independence.

Nityapriya Ghosh

Contents

BENGAL PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE, MYMENSINGH.

Preface / VII

Bengal Provincial Conference 1905 / 17

Election of the President / 17

Presidential Address / 19

Resolutions / 38

Second Day's Proceedings / 39 .

Resolutions Continued / 39

Next Conference at Barisal / 45

Conclusion / 45

A Mass Meeting / 45

Some relevant information about the Conference

(1) Editorial Note, *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 6. 3. 1905 / 46

(2) Draft Resolution / 49

(3) Editorial Note, *The Bengalee*, 9. 4. 1905 / 52

(4) Election of Delegates / 54

(5) A correspondent, *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 10. 4. 1905 / 75

(6) Own correspondent, *The Bengalee*, 15. 4. 1905 / 77

(7) Notice / 78

(8) Editorial Note, *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 17. 4. 1905 / 78

(9) Editorial Note, *The Indian Mirror*, 18. 4. 1905 / 82

(10) News, *The Bengalee*, 19. 4. 1905 / 85

(11) Editorial Note, *The Bengalee*, 19. 4. 1905 / 85

(12) News, *The Telegraph*, 22. 4. 1905 / 86

(13) Editorial Note, *The Telegraph*, 22. 4. 1905 / 87

(14) News, *The Bengalee*, 23. 4. 1905 / 88

(15) Editorial Note, *The Bengalee*, 23. 4. 1905 / 89

(16) Editorial Note, *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 24. 4. 1905 / 92

(17) Editorial Note, *The Indian Mirror*, 29. 4. 1905 / 94

(18) Editorial Note, *The Bengalee*, 27. 4. 1905 / 98

(19) Editorial Note, *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 28. 4. 1905 / 99

(20) Editorial Note, *The Indian Nation*, 1. 5. 1905 / 103

(21) Editorial Note, *The Indian Nation*, 8. 5. 1905 / 104

(22) Editorial Note, *The Statesman*, 26. 4. 1905 / 108

(23) Editorial Note, *The Hindu Patriot*, 29. 4. 1905 / 110

BENGAL PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE, BARISAL.

Bengal Provincial Conference 1906 / 115

Address of the Reception Committee Chairman / 121

Election of the President / 130

Address of the President / 131

First Resolution / 149

Second Day's Proceedings / 151

Some relevant information about the Conference

(1) Editorial Note, *The Bengalee*, 15. 3. 1906 / 157

(2) *The Bengalee's* Own Correspondent / 158

(3) Appeal / 158

(4) Editorial Note, *The Bengalee*, 5. 4. 1906 / 158

(5) Editorial Note, *The Bengalee*, 7. 4. 1906 / 160

(6) Editorial Note, *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 9. 4. 1906 / 160

(7) Notice / 164

(8) *The Bengalee's* Own Correspondent 10. 4. 1906 / 164

(9) Editorial Note, *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 12. 4. 1906 / 165

(10) Editorial Note, *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 13. 4. 1906 / 168

(11) Return of Conference Delegates / 171

(12) Letter to the Editor, *Amrita Bazar Patrika* / 174

(13) Editorial Note, *The Indian Mirror*, 18. 4. 1906 / 178

(14) Editorial Note, *The Bengalee*, 18. 4. 1906 / 179

(15) Editorial Note, *The Hindu* / 182

(16) Editorial Note, *The Indian Patriot* / 183

(17) Editorial Note, *Madras Standard* / 188

(18) Editorial Note, *Lahore Tribune* / 190

(19) Editorial Note, *Daily Times*, Lahore / 192

(20) Editorial Note, *The Eastern Voice* / 194

(21) Editorial Note, *The Indian Patriot*, 17. 4. 1906 / 195

(22) Editorial Note, *Madras Times* / 198

(23) Editorial Note, *The Panjabi*, 18. 4. 1906 / 198

(24) Editorial Note, *Lucknow Advocate* / 199

(25) Editorial Note, *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 26. 4. 1906 / 201

(26) Poem Published in *The Telegraph*, 17. 4. 1906 / 202

BENGAL PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE 1905

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MYMENSINGH

FOREWORD

The contradictory character of the Bengal Provincial Conferences was quite manifest in the 1905 session. The District Magistrate of Mymensingh allowed the use of the Government house for the location of the delegates. Yet, as we know, the 1906 session at Barisal was not at all allowed to be held by the Government. A resolution protesting against the secret and arbitrary way in which Sir Andrew Fraser was carrying on his administration was proposed in the 1905 session. But participating zemindars were not prepared to offend the ruler of the province and the proposal was dropped. Yet these zemindars were commended by the revolutionary intelligentsia of the time because of their supposed shedding of nervousness. The Mymensingh Conference was highly acclaimed because reportedly it united the Hindus and Muslims of the province. We of course know with our hindsight that no such thing happened then or since. This session again was hailed to be a meeting ground of the zemindars and ryots. But that again, as we know now, was more a pious wish than a fact.

The most striking however was the President's speech. 1905, we all know or so we wish to think, was a landmark in the history of the freedom struggle in Bengal. Yet it was discussed in the President's speech in a strange lackadaisical fashion. Referring to Lord Curzon's scheme of Bengal Partition, President Bhupendranath Basu said. "The zemindars and the ryots, the classes and the masses, the East and the West of Bengal, have all joined in condemning it. Gentlemen, I believe the adult male population of Dacca and Mymensingh would be about 16 millions. Nearly 700 protest meetings, of which newspapers took any notice, were held at some of which 10 to 40 thousand men attended. In villages and hamlets many humble people must have assembled of which we know nothing, but putting them aside for the moment, if we take the average attendance at each of these meetings at 1000 and this is a very moderate estimate, we find that, in any event, half the population affected had met to protest against the scheme of participation." Such popular anguish and fervour, one would have

thought, would produce an angry, not to say revolutionary, speech from the President. Yet the partition problem was referred by the President almost as a routine matter and at par with other problems like malaria, sanitation, or jute problem. Predictably the *Indian Mirror* commented, "Whatever may be thought of the Hon. Mr Bhupendranath Bose's Presidential address at the Mymensingh Conference, no one can say that it contains any revolutionary ideas." Even the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, a mouthpiece of the Provincial Conferences, said, "it is not quite up to the mark." *The Bengalee* however considered it as a masterly address.

Every Conference, when it was held, was of course treated as a huge success. *Amrita Bazar Patrika* unwittingly said of the 1905 Conference: "Mymensingh has succeeded in making these Conferences a reality, for surely they have hitherto been mere playthings." The students of history will of course take the Conference as it deserves, no matter what the contemporary euphoria or disappointment was. There is an impression that the Provincial Conferences continued to be playthings till they faded out. But these same conferences were viewed by the Government with utmost suspicion, sometimes with repressing measures. That constitutes the contradiction and therefore the significance in the Provincial Conferences.

BENGAL PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE 1905

The Bengal Provincial Conference of 1905 opened on the 22nd April at 12 o'clock noon. The big pandal tastefully decorated with foliage, festoons, streamers etc., were filled up to its utmost capacity long before the appointed hour. There were over 2,000 delegates present of which 1,800 belonged to the district, the majority being cultivators. There was such a rush of visitors that the large number of extra seats within the pandal and the two shamianas outside could ill contain them, and they had to squeeze themselves in the open space around the pandal. At a rough estimate some 10,000 people were present mostly representing the masses of the district. Notwithstanding the enormity of the rush, the assemblage was marked by its dignified and orderly demeanour throughout. A large number of zemindars of the district were on the dais.

A little after 2 p. m., the Secretary of the Reception Committee, Kumar Nagendranath Chowdhury, welcomed the delegates in a nice speech in the course of which he explained the objects of the conference briefly, stating the principal subjects to be dealt with and urged the necessity of continuing the agitation in the district all the year round. A letter from Mr. Anandamohan Bose was read, expressing regret for his inability to attend.

Election of the President

Then Babu Surendranath Banerjea, in proposing the Honourable Babu Bhupendranath Basu to the chair, spoke in most eloquent terms of his services to the country.

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April 22, 1974.

Yatindrakumar Ghosh

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The proposal was seconded by Rai Bahadur Radhaballav Chowdhuri of Sherpur and supported by Mr. A. H. Ghaznavi.

Mr. A. H. Ghaznavi said,

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

I have great pleasure in supporting my friend Mr. Surendranath Banerjea who has in an eloquent speech proposed that Hon'ble Mr. Bhupendranath Basu be elected President of this Conference. I feel sure that the proposal will be carried with loud acclamation.

Gentlemen, the Hon'ble Mr. Basu unites in himself vast and varied experience and qualification amongst representative men in Bengal. He stands in the first rank of our public men in Bengal. He shines conspicuously in the sphere of legal practice and erudition. He commands the enthusiastic admiration of his countrymen for his unflinching and unswerving devotion to the cause of his country. But, above all, he is one of those few and rare instances of public-spirited men who wears no party badge and no party colour. He is loved by the Hindus and the Mahomedans, and rightly and justly he has earned their admiration and respect.

The gulf which has hitherto separated the Hindus and the Mahomedans, would soon be bridged over if we had more men of such noble stamp and such catholic spirit as the Hon'ble Mr. Basu.

Mr. Basu has been selected as the President elect of this conference by a perfect unanimity of public opinion, by the communities concerned; and in this fact we have the most unmistakable proof of the confidence which the Mussalman population of Mymensingh has in him.

I am not singing praises in honour of Mr. Basu, nor am I exaggerating the significance of this event when I say, that this conference will be commemorated by the chroniclers of public movements as the one in which the Hindus and the Mahomedans were fired with one and the same zeal and united by one and the same tie "Uno Eodem Igni."

I earnestly hope that the example of this Conference will be followed in other districts and the Hindus and Mahomedans will always embrace each other on one common platform as brothers and fellow-countrymen (which they have been and really are for centuries past). It must be borne in mind that our national progress will be merely shallow and superficial until these two great communities heartily

co-operate and join with each other, working for one common and striving at one common goal.

Gentlemen, let me remind you of the immortal words of Father Paul : "Let us be Venetians first and Christians after." Similarly, gentlemen, if we really have the good of India at heart and not the promotion of our own selfish and sordid interests, let us always bear in mind: "Let us be Indians first and Hindus and Mahomedans after."

Gentlemen, unless and until we rise to this level of political union, our talk of patriotism, progress and reform must be hollow and meaningless.

I have taken this opportunity of addressing you with these few words upon this subject inasmuch as our worthy president-elect has always advocated this very principle not merely by precept but also by example.

A Mussalman friend of mine, writing to me about the Hon'ble Mr. Basu, says—

"I am decidedly of opinion that, had there been even 5 per cent amongst our leaders of all communities men of his stamp, the National Congress would have been the platform of United India."

In supporting therefore the election of this Hon'ble Mr. Bhupendranath Basu, I confidently hope that leaders of communities will keep his example and that of our common teacher Mr. Surendranath Banerjea in view, and if we do this, the consummation we all long for will not be far off.

The proposal was supported by Moulvi Amjad Ali.

Presidential Address

The Honourable Babu Bhupendranath Basu took the chair amidst loud acclamation and in addressing the Conference said—

Fellow Delegates and Gentlemen: I use no language of mere convention when I thank you for the great honour you have done me in electing me as the President of this Conference. I have served my novitiate in the service of our country for many years, and I know how to value the reward that you have bestowed on me to-day. A prize which carries with it the approbation and appreciation of one's own countrymen is much more to be coveted than any official decorations which not infrequently serve to illuminate what had better remain in the dark. I appreciate the honour all the more because it comes from my brethren of East Bengal who, all through India, are known and

esteemed for the keenness of their intellect, their energy, patriotism and perseverance. Gentlemen, I shall not, however detain you over matters that are merely personal. The questions that are agitating us, and to discuss some of which we are met in this Conference, cannot await the exchange of personal amenities. The air is overcast with the ominous shadow of an impending calamity and chills the freedom of life. This is the second time that East Bengal has extended her hospitality to the whole Bengali people to meet on her ancient soil: will this be the last?—that is the supreme question of the hour, the question of all questions.

Partition of Bengal.

The anxiety and the suspense through which all Bengal and specially the eastern districts have been passing for the last two years is probably unexampled in the history of our national life. Only on another occasion within living memory were our people so deeply moved as now. If human sufferings could impart their hue to the instruments by which they are inflicted, the indigo of Bengal would have yielded a red and not a blue dye. Our rulers in those days felt for the people and were not content with professing a sympathy which is as subtle and elusive as the smile of the sea. And the people knew in those days how to make themselves heard. Nearly 50 years of settled rule have since passed over us and the manhood of the race has almost disappeared. But gentlemen, if a too civilized administration has stilled in us the motions of life you who live in the outskirts, so to say, of that administration have still some life left in you. The opposition that you have offered to the scheme of the partition of Bengal is worthy of the noblest traditions of East Bengal. It maintains your high character for energy and perseverance and it half redeems the character of the Bengali race. I need not enter into details of that scheme which must be familiar to you all. Nor is it necessary to recapitulate the arguments that have been addressed against it from various quarters ; the zemindars and the ryots, the classes and the masses, the East and the West of Bengal, have all joined in condemning it. Gentlemen, I believe the adult male population of Dacca and Mymensingh would be about 16 millions. Nearly 700 protest meetings, of which newspapers took any notice were held, at some of which 10 to 40 thousand men attended. In villages and hamlets many humble people must have assembled of which we know nothing, but putting them aside for the

moment, if we take the average attendance at each of these meetings at 1000, and this is a very moderate estimate, we find that, in any event, half the population affected had met to protest against the scheme of partition. All classes, who according to Lord Curzon, constitute Indian public opinion, have joined in the movement of opposition. The Hindu and the Mussalman, the official and the non-official, the agriculturist and the industrialist and, I may add the English and the Indians were all united in their protest. For once, the leading magnates amongst the landed classes who with a zeal the reward of which is not always commensurate with its fervour, shun political platforms as if they were so many scaffolds offering but a thin partition from a yawning pit—they also, notwithstanding the bait of prospective prestige, threw in their lot with the people and took their right place in the controversy. The masses, not caring how the great world moves, except it be for the changing seasons which may make or mar them, but realizing how this change would affect their interests, joined the movement in their thousands. The busy professional man, not caring for official favour or official frown, the humble daily labourer too small for either, all joined hands in supplication and in protest.

You have not only protested but have suggested alternative schemes. We have conformed to all the limitations which Lord Curzon would impose upon public opinion in order to accept it as a stimulus and a check and we have suggested that a Governor appointed by His Majesty with an Executive Council would meet the necessities of the case. And, gentlemen, what are these necessities? Have Dacca and Mymensingh suffered because of their great distance from the centre of the Government? Well, if educational activity, material prosperity, public enterprise, social and political influence are any index of the growth and development of a people, you probably stand in forefront of all the districts of Bengal not excepting even the metropolitan district of the 24 Parganas. We have heard complaints from people in our part of Bengal that they feel overwhelmed by the stronger individuality of the sojourners from the eastern districts. The youth of East Bengal carry away many of the prizes, the merchants, bankers and traders much of the wealth, the zemindars most of the distinctions and honours which they think ought to go to the people of West and Central Bengal. This does not disclose a state of decadance or moribund existence, and if so much has been achieved by the sacrifice of a small quantum of personal rule, the sacrifice was

worth making. Governments are for the people, at least in all civilized societies, and the people do not seem any the worse off because the Government has not been brought more closely home to them.

The present Secretary of the Government of India is nothing if not historical ; he draws our attention to a despatch of Sir Stafford Northcote of the year 1868, when that eminent statesman, after the experiences of the Orissa famine and parts of Orissa were nearly a month's journey from Calcutta, suggested the transfer of the outlying districts of Bengal to other provincial Governments. This was nearly 4 decades ago. Since that time even the Government of India has moved. Railways had hardly then come into existence, but have now brought together the most distant parts of the province, and places which could not be reached in less than 15 days employing the swiftest methods of locomotion then available, can now be reached in as many hours. It takes now less time to reach the furthestmost corner of Assam than it took to reach a place within say, one hundred miles of Calcutta in the early sixties. Distance is merely a question of time and the Lieutenant-Governors of today cannot complain that any part of Bengal is not easily accessible or is difficult to get at.

Talking of personal rule we do not think that shifting the seat of Government would mean any closer touch with the masses. The classes do not count for much with our rulers and as to the masses—even they cannot be brought within the sphere of the personal rule of the Governor, if that expression means a system of administration in which the ruler would personally be cognizant of the wants and necessities, hopes and fears, of the people. The Bengal ryot is happily free from the harassing assessment imposed by the Government upon the peasantry in the other provinces of India, and is not, therefore, brought in contract with the provincial rulers. He knows his chowkidar and constable and he knows that if somehow or other he incurs the displeasure of these mighty officials he will be hauled up in a court where, to his surprise, he would find that the policeman whom he had dared to offend was after all the real arbiter of his destiny. He comes to know that the great Magistrate Saheb is the head of that body, a limb of which he had trodden upon and he cries 'Haribole or Bismilla' and holds his peace. When we bring a gentleman, whose career has been spent in the Punjab or Oudh to rule in Purnia or Bengal how can we expect him to come into personal contact with the masses, whose language and habits of thought, whose virtues and whose vices,

are wholly unknown to him ? It is to the officers on the spot that he must look to for help and light and they are there already.

The scheme originally put forward has not even the advantage of looking nice on paper for it cuts off protuberances in the North East in order to add others at the South East, and while it rightly adds the smaller units of the Oriya-speaking people to the greater mass, it makes over part of Chota Nagpur to the Central Provinces, with which it is imperfectly connected ; and whereas it adds Ganjam and Sambulpur to Orissa on the plea of a common language, it sets aside that plea when it divides Bengal Proper into two. The defects and drawbacks of the original scheme have been so thoroughly exposed that the originators have themselves dropped it and a greater scheme has been shadowed forth. This scheme which, however, has nowhere been authoritatively put forward, but only suggested and the details of which are unknown to the public ; it does not cut off a limb though a vital and important one, but cuts the whole Bengalee people into two and seeks to place two administrations on similar footing over them. The East will have its Lieutenant-Governor and his Secretaries and Council, its Board of Revenue, its summer and winter headquarters as the West ; the East may have a chief court with, I believe, a civilian Chief Justice, who, if he is subservient to the powers that be, might aspire to be a Lieutenant-Governor. It has also been suggested in some quarters that the Calcutta High Court with its large number of judges may be cut up like the province over which it spreads its protecting arms and transplanted in two halves over the two divisions. Is not the present High Court with its 15 Judges and a Chief Justice nominated from England and an independent Bar a nuisance which ought to be abated, a menace to the growing power of the executive which ought to be checked ? And what if all this means additional burdens on a people already groaning under one of the heaviest systems of taxation ? This will be a new planetary system with its own sun and shining orbs complete to illuminate the official sky with a new group of satellites alternating between light and shade and moving round in silent adoration. And gentlemen, are the people of the country to have no voice in such revolutionary, territorial and administrative changes ? We have now developed a common literature which has smoothed down dialectic differences, we are guided by common interests which are serving to demolish the barriers of provincial jealousy, we follow common ideals under common leaders, and we belong to a common

race and are crystallizing into a united nation round a common central Government. Different governments will set up different ideals, different standards, different laws, different services, different aims and will drive a line of cleavage through a homogeneous mass which will widen with the time. We are trying to swim past the muddy and troubled shores of castes and creeds, past the currents of race into the purer stream of a national life, and is the bold swimmer to be thrown back because he seems likely to succeed ?

Gentlemen, we cannot afford to part with East Bengal ; it has always played a prominent part in the common history of the Bengalee people. Bhagadatta, who fought at Kurukshetra, was a ruler of East Bengal. Your country of Banga overshadowed Rarhi, Barendra and Samatata and gave its name to the whole Bengalee race and the country inhabited by it. Lord Curzon's mentor ought to have known: when he gave lessons to his august pupil on Indian ethnology, that the 'Bangal' may have his provincialities, but it is nevertheless a masterful individual and his name and personality dominate the whole Bengalee nation.

Gentlemen, we do not know yet how we stand with regard to this question. The Government unfortunately has not taken us into its confidence. That the question is still fermenting in the minds of our rulers is apparent from the reference made by the Viceroy in the Imperial Council recently to the North-Western Frontier Province which has not long ago been separated from the Punjab administration. The splitting up of the province was resisted in some quarters, said Lord Curzon, but now that it is an accomplished fact, the Viceroy hears no more complaints. I have not much personal knowledge of the frontier tribes. In point of education, intelligence and culture, I do not know how they stand with regard to the people of East Bengal. We do not profess to be familiar with the system of Government under which they lived and to which they were accustomed before their part of the country was constituted into a separate administration. Punjab itself was under a Chief Commissioner not very long ago and we have reasons to believe that the frontier tribes had not developed a literature and language and had not adapted themselves to the settled mode of Government to the same extent as the rest of the Panjab. But whatever may be the value of the analogy, it points out the danger which still looms ahead of us.

You men of East Bengal have shown in the past great powers of

organization and action. Do not for a moment now relax your efforts, for the forces that threatened to divide us are still at work, secretly but no less actively. Like other destructive forces they may be gathering strength in some mysterious forge hidden under official tomes and may someday burst forth to our consternation and work havoc and ruin among us.

Primary and Free Education for the Masses

Gentlemen, Provincial Conferences have this advantage over the meetings of the Congress that they can deal in greater detail with local questions. In the foreground, I have naturally and necessarily placed the questions which affect our life and interest as a nation but other questions of great importance also await our attention the principal amongst them being the education of the masses. An uneducated mass is a source of danger and weakness of the State. Education is the paramount duty of the State, specially the education of the poor. The Government of Bengal cannot be said to have done its duty in this direction so long. It has let matters drift to the great detriment of its own interests and the interests of the people. A few figures will explain what I mean. Not to speak of other countries, but taking the other provinces of the Empire, Bombay spends on primary education Rs. 107 per 1000 of population, Berar Rs. 75, Assam Rs. 33 and we spend only Rs. 11 per 1000; and of this Rs 11, the provincial revenues contribute 7.8 per cent, local funds 67.3 per cent., the rest being met by fees and other sources of revenue. I shall not trouble you with details but I may say, by way of illustration, taking the latest figures available viz, those for the year 1903-04, that of the total sum of Rs. 718, 613 spent on upper primary education, only Rs. 44,622 was contributed by provincial and Rs. 2,24,211 from local funds, and the rest of the expenditure with a small contribution from Municipal funds was met from fees. Of the total sum of 30 lakhs (speaking in round numbers) spent on lower primary education for boys and girls, the Provincial revenues contributed Rs. 1,43,000, the local boards 7,48,000 and the Municipalities 53,000 and Rs. 16,36,000 were derived from fees, that is to say more than half the cost of elementary education in Bengal is borne by the agriculturists and artisans for whose children this education is primarily intended. I might say $\frac{3}{4}$ of those people contribute equally with the landed classes towards the district funds from which such a heavy contribution is levied.

In most civilized countries, elementary education is compulsory and free: why should it be so heavily handicapped in one of the poorest countries in the world and with a backward and illiterate population ? Our Government can certainly achieve what the native states of Baroda and Mysore are trying to. Even under the present state of things, nearly every boy in 3 from amongst the classes who attend primary schools is sent to school. If the burdens were lightened, there is no doubt that a great impetus could be given to the spread of education amongst the masses. As in other countries, so in ours elementary education ought to be free, and it is not difficult to make it compulsory. The masses have remained submerged for centuries. There has been no buoyant force to lift them up. To the eternal credit of England be it said that she has not followed in India the traditions of the past. Knowledge is no longer the monopoly of the few but the heritage of all,—not an exclusive goddess who will receive worship from privileged hands but a beneficent deity who will accept any votary who has got the devotion and the spirit. And therein, to my mind, lies the meaning of the inscrutable dispensation of Providence by which the East has been brought under the West. But though our Government has removed the barriers and given the impetus, it has not followed up its policy with whole-heartedness. We are glad that the Government is now awakening to its responsibilities and that the grants on primary education are being enhanced. We are thankful to the Imperial Government for the grant of 10 lakhs of Rupees made for primary education in Bengal. We welcome the efforts of Government to devise some means for the wider diffusion of knowledge amongst the masses, and to render elementary education more attractive to those for whom it is intended. We trust, however, in this connection, that the Government is by this time convinced that it is neither necessary nor desirable to write text books in English and then translate them into the dialects of Bengali that they may be read and understood by the Bengali agriculturist and the Bengali artisan.

University Education

But if the Government has a duty with regard to primary education, it has also a duty in regard to higher education. The total direct expenditure on higher education was Rs 587,000 in 1903-1904. The indirect expenditure on scholarship amounted to 1,35,000 and taking buildings, direction, inspection, it would amount to about Rs 4,50,000.

On a liberal computation we may take the total expenditure direct and indirect, at Rs 12,00,000. This is a very small expenditure on higher education for a population of 74 millions and very small expenditure indeed for a State with an available income of nearly 7 crores of Rupees.

It is an expenditure or rather parsimony wholly unjustifiable any way you look at it. What is the basis of the purity of the services, Judicial and Executive, on which the Government takes such a just pride but higher education? What gives the backbone to the professional classes, who, because they are such fearless critics of Government, may not be over much liked and are often maligned, who act sometime as a stimulus to Government and discharge a function of His Majesty's opposition in England, without the opportunities which the opposition enjoy. But for them, Jove would not be found nodding and speeches of our rulers would fall flat like stale soda water and not effervesce like sparkling champagne which charms and also inebriates. The duty of Government is clear: if it wants to elevate and purify its services the only panacea is education, the only stimulus is a just and equitable treatment.

Public attention may be diverted by elaborate commissions, public voice may be choked by bulky resolutions, royal pledges of grace and mercy and justice may be distorted by brilliant sophistry which serve to obscure what it professes to explain but the cardinal question remains if the people are to be elevated they must be educated.

Gentlemen, the Universities have been reconstituted and it is claimed for them that they will give an impetus to higher education which was lacking under the old system. Let us hope it will. Let us hope the new system will work with sympathy and that it will conduce to the elevation of our people ; but we fear. On a recent occasion while validating the illegalities of the Universities, His Excellency, referring to the University of Calcutta, was pleased to observe that the prophecies of those who opposed the University Bill and have predicted that the Senate would be Europeanized had not been fulfilled and that there was an actual excess of 3 Indian members over the European. Gentlemen, there is a saying amongst us that what is pastime to the gods is sin to the mortals: in our mythology superior persons were classed as gods. It may be permissible to His Excellency to start and demolish an argument which was never advanced. To us, men of the East, it is not so permissible. Our contention was not that the Senate would have a majority of Englishmen, but that it would have always

an overwhelming official majority classing therein—the English members, officials, semi-official and non-official and the official Indian members. In the list of nominated members, apart from 6 ‘ex-officio’ fellows, out of 71 members, 53 are Englishmen ; the rest Indian officials and quasi-officials. How a Senate so constituted pays regard to Indian interests was shown by the recent elections of members by the faculties,, who out of a total number of 8, elected 7 officials, and who constituted a syndicate in which there would have been no Indian but for the faculty of law. I will go into further details. The Senate, through its faculties, had to elect 10 members, of whom 8 was given to the faculties of Arts, Science, Medicine and Engineering. These faculties elected 7 officials, pure and simple. The faculty of Law alone elected 2 non-officials. Then followed an incident which probably the Government itself had not anticipated. The faculties of this Senate in which His Excellency was pleased to observe that there was a majority of 3 Indians proceeded to appoint a Syndicate. Would you believe that, excepting from the faculty of Law, no Indian was elected ? We have got a syndicate of 10 members, of whom 8 are Europeans and 2 Indians, both elected by the faculty of Law ; but for the faculty of Law, the whole Syndicate would have consisted of Europeans only and the direction of the education of Bengal, with a native population of 73 millions and a half, would have remained in the hands or a body composed wholly of Europeans. Such a thing would be impossible and intolerable in any other country but India.

Gentlemen, I need not disclose to what lengths the Syndicate so constituted had gone in appointing the various committees of the Senate, how carefully all independent men were excluded. But in this connection I may be permitted to think, on behalf of the entire educated community, the Rector of our University Sir Andrew Fraser, who with a truly statesman-like instinct used his personal influence to infuse some element of independent Indian opinion into the composition of these committees ; but for him the non-official Indian element would have been nowhere. Gentlemen this is not the only service Sir Andrew Fraser has rendered us in matters educational, for his heart is in the work of education. Let us hope that in the remaining years of His Honour’s administration the reproach which has so justly attached to Government for its neglect of this most important branch of administration will be removed. But while not minimizing the

responsibility of the Government, may I be permitted to observe that, in matters of education specially in the higher branches, we, the people, have not done our duty: where are the foundations, where the scholarships, where the prizes, where the facilities which public spirit in other countries has given to education ? Until that spirit is created amongst us, until our rich men come to realize that the best way to perpetuate their names is to connect them with some great work of public utility, until our educated community feel that they who owe so much to the education they have received, have a debt to repay to the country which has given them the education, real progress cannot be hoped for at all.

Competitive Examination for the Public Service

While dealing with the question of education, I may be excused if I refer to another subject intimately connected with it, I mean the abolition of the competitive examination for the provincial executive services and the employment of Indians in the public services of this country. As regards the first, I shall not repeat what I said elsewhere : His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor has joined issue with us in this matter. His Honour has not been pleased to accept my picture of the development of sycophancy which the present system will lead to. I am half-inclined to suspect that his Honour believes that the development has already reached its limits. His Honour is not probably aware that his District officers are oftentimes objects of greater veneration than himself. They have opportunities of making their power felt, which the Lieutenant-Governor has not, and which he would not use even if he had. If the old system was at fault, a development on more liberal lines was what was expected and not a setting back of the hand: there has been the charge that the men appointed by competition have been found unworthy or wanting or that the public service has deteriorated by their introduction. On the country, the testimony is unanimous that these men have proved the salt of the service. Why then this anxiety to go back to nomination ? The answer is given in the words of the Government resolution—

“He (the Lieutenant-Governor) regards it as the duty of Government to reconcile the conflicting claims of diverse rival religions, of varying degrees of intellectual and administrative aptitude and adaptability of different races occupying the different parts of the province.”

We are far from denying to our more backward brethren the opportunities of entering the public service, from which, for some time yet to come, they might to a large extent remain excluded if a rigid system of competition were followed. But if it is sought to elevate them, it will not be by holding out a premium to backwardness, by driving them more and more to lean on recommendation and nomination and to employ the arts, let us not say of sycophancy, but of successful canvassing but only by teaching them to be more self-reliant and to stand on their own legs. Independence and straightforwardness of character cannot grow out of dependence and servility : a ship can be built only of oak but never out of weeds.

And gentlemen, the executive service is one in which strength of character is of the utmost necessity. Situated as that service is, dependent on and subordinate to the District Magistrate who combines in himself the functions of the Police and the Judge, it is absolutely essential that the service for the sake of its own honour as well as for the welfare of the community should be strengthened by men who may break but will never bend. And who are more likely to satisfy this standard, men who enter the service on the strength of their own merit; men who have carved their way through industry and pluck and perseverance or men who enter on their career through the backdoor of nomination ? There have been on an average 18 appointments a year : half of these may be easily thrown open to competition, pure and simple, taking care that properly qualified men are allowed to compete. 6 instead of 9 may be reserved for nomination out of candidates who must have appeared in the examination and have attained to a definite standard and the remaining three recruited from the ranks of the inferior grades of the subordinate executive service. The backward communities, the rival creeds and diverse races, might then all come under the second category without going through the humiliating process of obtaining a nomination and would be stimulated to further efforts to secure a large share of this appointment through competition.

The evils of appointments by patronage are so patent, and have been found so intolerable even in a free and self-governing country like England, that the system has been practically given up in that country leading, according to the testimony of *Englishman*, to the purification of the public service and the satisfaction of the national sense of justice. His Honour may think, any one unacquainted with the true state of things would think, that on a recent occasion I

drew an overcoloured picture of what this new system will lead to, when the whole nation, advanced, and backward and all the races all the creeds inhabiting Bengal, will have to seek preferment through patronage. But, gentlemen, our Lieutenant-Governor after all is helpless. The Government of India in their resolution on the Indian Educational Policy stated that they had come to the conclusion that the system of competitive examination is not a suitable or satisfactory system of admission to the Government Service in this country.

We regret more that the Lieutenant-Governor himself on the best products of competition, concurs in this opinion than that he should have given effect to it.

Wider Employment of Indians in the Public Services

Gentlemen, in the appointment of Indians to the public services of their country the Government of India claims to have shown unexampled liberality, meaning thereby the liberality of a conquering to a conquered race. I do not know if the Government of India ever possessed the historic sense. Students of Indian history know how the dominion of India passed over to England. In the words of one of the most thoughtful historical writers of the last century this was not a foreign conquest but rather an internal revolution. In the state of anarchy into which the country had fallen, the people invited and set up the English. They were rulers by choice and much was expected from them. India was not conquered and won by the unfought battle of Plassey nor was she conquered when the intrigues and jealousies of her princes placed them under the thumb of the paramount power, but she has been conquered since by over-centralization and over-legislation. Assuming, however that India was conquered by the English in the same sense as Alexander conquered Persia, and Caesar conquered Gaul and Albion and the Mughuls conquered India, not to refer to the example nearer home and with which we are familiar where are the Hindu Military commanders, the Hindu Governors, the Hindu Statesmen and the Hindu plenipotentiaries, of the palmy days of the Mughul Empire ? Gentlemen, I prefer to rest on the solid foundation of facts rather than let my fancy fly with the imagination of even the greatest personage in this realm. The Honourable Mr. Gokhale has shown that the Indian is nowhere in the Public Service so far as the superior grades are concerned. It may be satisfactory to our rulers in this comparison to consider appointments carrying a salary of Rs 75

a month: but the manhood of India will not for ever rest content with that grade. Mr. Gokhale gives figures showing shrinkage and not expansion in the employment of Indians in the higher appointments, figures which have not yet been controverted. During the period that the Government of India has taken under review, namely from 1867 to 1903, our population has increased by 12 millions and the educational standard has more than doubled itself, but where are we to-day in the public service of our country? We are wholly excluded from some and practically from most of the minor Civil Services. We can enter the Civil Service by competition in England, but not the superior grades of the Minor Public Services. And now we are told on the highest authority in India that we have all along misunderstood the tenor of the great Proclamation of Queen Victoria. The Government of India in their resolution, dated 4th June, 1904, formulated two principles, viz—that the highest ranks of civil employment in India though open to such Indians as proceed to England and pass the requisite tests “must nevertheless as a general rule be held” by Englishmen and that outside this “corps delite” the Government shall, “as far as possible” employ native agency and the Viceroy asserts that these principles in no way derogate from the language or tenor of the Proclamation or of the Government of India Act of 1833. The words of the Queen’s Proclamation are familiar to most of us, but not so the Act of 1833. Section 87 of that Act provides that no person by reason of his birth, creed or colour shall be disqualified from holding any office in the service of the East India Company. The Directors in their despatch accompanying that Act say, “you will observe that its object is not to ascertain qualification but to remove disqualification.” The beneficent intentions of the Charter Act practically remained a dead letter and the late Queen on the occasion of a great public event reiterated and emphasized what had already been conferred on her Indian subjects. When a native of India is not allowed to enter the various services not because he is unfit but because he is a native of India and therefore presumed to be unfit, both the spirit and the letter of the Charter, and the Proclamation are broken. The objections which His Honour has stated against the native of India entering the superior Police Service by competition in England on the ground of his caste, race or religion would apply equally to the Civil Service ; but though the Civil Service is open to us under heavy limitations no doubt the Police Service, the Preventive service, the superior grades of the

Customs and Forest Service and many other services which I might name are not, the Viceroy has referred us to the Report of the Public Service Commission as creating the two distinct services-Imperial and Provincial. We all know the history of that report, we all know how the Indian members of the Commission finding that the higher services notwithstanding all solemn promises to the contrary have practically been closed to the natives of India recommended the scheme of the provincial service believing that Indians would find larger employment therein and a specified number of the appointments would be reserved for them. While the Government accepted their recommendation about creating an exclusive superior service the Indians fared no better if not worse in the provincial services. No commission or resolution of the Government of India can alter a parliamentary statute or undo the gracious promise of the sovereign or take away a people's rights.

Malaria and Sanitation

Gentlemen, while dealing with these broader questions affecting our national well-being, I would pointedly ask the attention of the Conference to the question of Malarial fever, which is working such terrible havoc in rural Bengal. We suffer from it more in West Bengal than probably you do here, though parts of Mymensing, the Tangail Sub-Division for instance, are badly hit. It is a question of the greatest magnitude so far as we are concerned and the matter is attracting the attention of our Government which is in full sympathy with us in this matter. Good drinking water, good drainage, sanitary surroundings and a good diet, if procurable, would, I believe, be of greater avail than the cheapening of quinine pice-packets. In this connection, we have a duty to perform: the recognition by our Government that the Road Cess Fund has been to a great extent diverted from its original purposes, and the reparation that it is making, will enable our district and local boards to pay much greater attention than they have been hitherto doing to the questions of pure drinking water and sanitation. On our part we must teach the moffasil people, by example and precept, how to reserve tanks for drinking purposes, how to improve the sanitation of their surroundings and how to build their humble homesteads with greater regard to sanitary laws. Let it not be said of us that, though we are unable to assist the Government in the large question of drainage and the cleaning of river beds, in which we must invoke the willing assistance of Government, we cannot in our humble

way propagate among our own people the laws of sanitation which modern science has established. The Government may also do a great deal in this direction. The Guru holds an important position in village life and his importance would be all the more enhanced if he knew a little more of sanitation than of hydrostatics and zoology.

Other Subjects for Discussion.

Gentlemen, I have in another place said what I had to say about the main features of the proposed Jute Bill. The district of Mymensing is the home of the industry in Bengal and we have come here to learn and not to teach.

There is one other matter to which I wish to refer— the proposed legislation affecting the rights of the landlord and tenants. No one will pronounce the present Rent Act as a piece of legislative perfection, but the provisions which the Government proposes to deal with have not given much trouble. Much has been done to disturb the old relationship between the landlord and his tenant: new ideas have upset the old. There is an indication of a feeling that our rulers have probably gone too far in destroying the old institution of the country and severing its old bonds. Why move further in the same direction ?

Conclusion

Gentlemen, in all that I have said I have not sought to revile the Government. We seek to influence and not to abuse. Do our rulers think that abuse is pleasant to us, or do they think that we are foolish enough to believe that we gain anything by it ? Nobody gains by abuse. When Lord Curzon stigmatizes us from his place in the Council Chamber the enemies of Government, when he takes upon to criticize our national works which probably he has never read, to vilify our national character which by his own admission he does not understand, he does not gain nor does the Government gain, of which he is the spokesman. It is far from our intentions to ascribe sinister motives to Government. We are always anxious to give Government credit for what it does or professes to do for us. We are anxious to please, for we have nothing to gain by displeasing. We are so fallen, so utterly helpless, so utterly hopeless that little things win us ; a kind word, a kind deed is enough to warm the hearts that throb under a tropical sun ; but even we, such as we are, cannot resist

the irresistible logic of facts. We do not accuse Lord Curzon of the want of a sentimental attraction for the East, a sort of a scholar's admiration for its history, its antiquity and traditions ; we do not accuse him of racial bias. Gentlemen, racial bias sometimes exists in a state of unconscious cerebration. But when we find Lord Curzon in a solemn resolution, saying that the English race must practically monopolize the superior appointments "for they possess partly by heredity, partly by upbringing and partly by education, the knowledge of the principles of Government, the habits of mind and the vigours of character which are essential for the posts," and when we find him disclaiming all racial bias we pause and wonder. In British India, the Indian is never given a chance, but he is relegated to a back place in anticipation. Lord Curzon has referred in glowing terms to the potentiality of our civic life. We may, he says, be ministers of native states, aye, we may be in states which though native, are practically foreign to us but in our own Government we may not even be a member of his Lordship's Executive Council. With all his sympathy and veneration for the East, has he given us a single appointment which we had not held, has he removed a single barrier, has he extended by a single line the boundary of our vision ?

In the Municipality of the Metropolis of India, the control of the local affairs has been taken from the hands of the people: in the Universities the control of their educational affairs has also been taken from the hands of the people: the higher appointments have practically been denied to them: the people have been crying for the separation of the judicial and executive functions of the District Officers: it is a counsel of perfection, but incapable of being carried out for want of funds. The treasury is now over-flowing with money, but this much-needed relief has not come. These and others like them, His Lordship can hardly claim as evidences of his sympathy for the native, for his hopes and aspirations. But let that subject pass: it is no use reviving bitter memories: it is no use lamenting the 'might have been' and the 'has been'.

Many questions of varying degrees of importance crowd upon my mind as I stand before you. It is not possible without being tiresome to deal with them in the course of a single speech. They will be placed before you in the different resolutions that we shall presently proceed to discuss. One of these resolutions, I notice with pleasure, is the curtailment of marriage expenses in Bengal, a subject in which Justice

Chandramadhab Ghosh has taken a great and active interest and which deals with one of the greatest evils against which our society has to contend.

But there is one other matter to which I would address myself before I close. There seems to be an imposition in certain quarters that political agitation in India has been tried and failed, that the Government has not moved with the degree of celerity that we wanted: that it has not moved at all and that not unoften it has gone back. The result of it all is not progress but bitterness, not success but disappointment. Leave the Government alone and let us work out our destiny in isolation. Gentlemen, such a line of conduct is neither desirable nor possible.

No doubt the difficulties of our position are great, and alien Government set up, by a distant people and composed of men few of whom know the people and their language, habits or thoughts can hardly command the whole-hearted devotion or loyalty of the people. Its aloofness, its racial pride repels us. It turns as it seems to us a deaf ear to our prayers and to our legitimate aspirations. We labour under great disadvantages for we pay the taxes which others spend, we till the soil and sow the seed which others reap, we are weak, because disunited, we are helpless, because infirm of purpose, but in spite of all these drawbacks our efforts have not altogether been in vain. No Government however autocratic could stand divorced from the people's allegiance. and no allegiance is possible without mutual understanding. The Government of India professes to consult public opinion in its measures and invites it. It is our evident duty to offer it. It is our duty to ourselves and to our country to protest against measures which we believe will be harmful to the people ; if we do not do so, we fail in our obvious duty as citizens, we let judgment go against us by default. Our silence is construed into acquiescence, I may remind you that obnoxious measures have been withdrawn or modified in deference to public opinion. Cases in point will occur to many present here. The right of the people to a share in the Government of their country has been recognized, though tardily, very tardily I am afraid and grudgingly. We are powerless now, in the Councils of our Government, but we must cherish and nourish the tiny seedling of representation that we have secured. The whole civilized world see how overwhelming are the forces of the Government against the representatives of people and therein lies our hope. Gentlemen, we

cannot let politics alone: the discussion of political questions, our very defects and disappointments, have called the pointed attention of our people as to how to raise themselves ; we are all striving in an humble way to grapple with the facts of life, to toil and labour for the good of our country. God only knows under what discouragement. Activity is being displayed on all sides,—social, religious, educational and industrial: to every lover of this country this must be a welcome sign. The educationist, the industrialist, the social and political reformer must all press forward hand in hand. One separated from the others would only weaken our ranks. The discussion of the political situation has created a public opinion that now sways India from one end to the other. An unpopular or reactionary measure sends a pulsation of motion through the languid channels of our national life: common interests, common wants, common fears and common hopes under a common Government, are bringing together the different provinces of India. Conferences and Congresses gather together on a common platform men from all parts of the country, from Bengal to Assam, from the foot of the Himalayas to the shores of the Sea and are silently knitting together in bonds of sympathy the web which will gather the Indian races into a nation. The day may be distant, but to us has been permitted the vision of the flash, though yet faint and glimmering in the morning sky. The wheels of progress move slowly: it is for us to quicken their motion.

It does not matter whether we are a conglomerate of races or a nation ; words are but marks in the milestone of time. Whatever we are, we belong to India. It is a country well worth living for and well worth dying for. As the Bengalee poet sings:

“From her ancient forests rose the smoke of the sacrificial fire, from her ancient groves ascended the first articulate prayer to the throne of the All High and from her ancient shores proceeded the light which illuminated the East and West.” Let us bring to her service greater earnestness, greater devotion, greater sacrifice. Let that be the rule of our life and the day of India’s regeneration will not be far off.

Resolutions

The Rev. M. A. Neville then, in response to a call from the Chair, proposed the following resolution—

“That this Conference while agreeing with the views expressed, in the Government resolution on education, No. 658, to the effect that the courses of instruction now followed in primary schools are too long, too advanced and too diversified for the agricultural classes emphatically protests against the proposal to divide the Bengali language into different dialects. This Conference does not advocate the use of scholarly language in the text-books intended for the rural schools and recognises the fact that the spoken language is differentiated by provincialism in different districts and in the different parts of the district, but the Conference must affirm the books written in correct but simple Bengali are understood in every district by all who are able to read them and that furthermore the division of the language into dialects reduced to the level of uneducated in the various districts would prove a great obstacle to its further development and would be viewed with disapproval by the people concerned and this Conference further protests against the recommendation of the committee referred to in the resolution mentioned above that the text book for Bengalee children should in the first instance be prepared in English and then translated into Bengali as undesirable and unnecessary.

The speaker said that he had visited different Shires in England and found similar difficulty of understanding and being understood by the rural population there. Such is the divergence of English provincial dialects and yet the written language is the same everywhere and in England it was never contemplated that the people should be taught in their provincial dialects in rural schools. The speaker continued that by the division of language not only its progress would be arrested, but would bring about its ultimate ruin.

The resolution was duly seconded and supported by Babus Bipinchandra Pal, Ramnarayan Aughasti, Upendranath Sen and others. The resolution was then put to vote and carried with acclamation.

At about 5 in the afternoon the meeting separated to meet again at noon next day.

Second Day's Proceedings

200 more delegates arrived on 22nd April. Over 2,000 delegates were present this day, the 23rd April. The gathering was the same as yesterday. More than 5,000 people were present. The opinion is unanimous that the Conference has been an unprecedented success.

Resolutions continued

The proceedings were resumed at 12, when the President said that he had received a telegram from Raja Kamaleswarprasad Singh of Purnia requesting to include the question of the Hindi languages in the previous days resolution about the division of the Bengali language: the request was acceded to. The President asked to put to meeting the resolution regarding the partition of Bengal without speeches and the following resolution was carried unanimously in solemn silence, the whole Conference standing—

“That this Conference is strongly of opinion that any scheme in any form whatsoever of dividing the territories under the Government of Bengal and thereby retarding the progress and development of the Bengalee people should be definitely abandoned. This Conference further prays that the Lieutenant-Governorship of Bengal be raised to the status of a Presidency Government with an Executive Council.”

The resolution was proposed by Rai Yatindranath Chaudhury of Taki, seconded by Babu Anathbandhu Guha of Mymensingh and supported by Babus Jogendra Chandra Mukherjee of Purnia, Jasodakumar Ghosh of Noakhali, Akhilchandra Datta of Tipperah, Hemchandra DasChoudhury of Chittagong, Nagendranath Sen of Khulna, Mathuranath Maitra of Faridpur, Hariprasad Chatterjee of Nadia, Rajaninath Bose of Dacca, UpendraChandra Ghosh of Barisal, Maulvi Abdul Rahaman of Haibatnagar, Hardayal Nag of Chandpore and Dewan Saheb of Etna.

The Third Resolution ran as follows

“That this Conference views with grave alarm and anxiety the Jute Bill which has been submitted to Government by one class of mercantile community of Calcutta and which in the opinion of this Conference is calculated to seriously injure this important industry of Bengal and specially of the Mymensingh District. This Conference earnestly prays that the said Bill be altogether abandoned.”

Babu Radharaman Kar of Calcutta proposed the above resolution and said that the Jute Bill is unsound in principle and will be absolutely unworkable in practice and it strongly condemns this proposal as calculated to protect the interest of a small section of the people connected with the Jute Industry while causing great hardship and oppression to the general body of cultivators and dealers in loose jutes and thereby seriously interfering with the free development of the jute trade. As a baler the mover gave the history how the Jute Bill owed its existence to the representation of the Balers Association. Though in the beginning the mover was for legislation but now he came to realize that it was one-sided in nature, and oppressing in operation.

Babu Isanchandra Chakravarty (Mymensingh) seconding the resolution said as to adulteration the rayats were not responsible. He heard it said that a trader would refuse paying the weighman if not clever enough to make 103 maunds out of every 100 maunds of Jute purchased.

The resolution was supported by Babu Devendramohan Chaudhury of Bajitpur and 3 delegates (cultivators) Sheikhs Nazer-uddin, Azim and Yokubali. Their rustic speeches made great impression upon the vast audience. The simplicity with which they refuted the accusations of mixing water and sand surprised the whole audience. Their speeches were a magnificent success. None ever expected such simplicity of eloquence. Yakubali Khan (Tangail) said when jute shrubs were steeped into water and allowed to rot, plots of grass are spread over it. This process produces three varieties in each jute bundle. Owing to repeated rainfall and winds and muddiness of yards, admixture of sand and water is unavoidable. The cultivators, he said, did not gain anything by adulteration as there was great difference of price between dry and moist jute.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

The Fourth Resolution ran as follows

“(a) That this Conference while thanking the Government for its annual contribution of Twelve-half Lakhs of Rupees for the improvement of the financial condition of the District Boards and for the admission made by His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, that the Road Cess had been diverted to purpose for which it was not intended, is of opinion that the Government should take steps to see that the money realized

on account of this cess be not spent for any purposes other than those for which it was originally levied, namely,

(i) the construction and maintenance of "village roads and local paths", (Sir George Campbell's Road Cess Proclamation of 1873)

(ii) the sinking and improving of wells, tanks and other works of irrigation affecting comparatively small areas of land, so that the benefits to be derived from the Road Cess may be, to quote the words of the late Duke of Argyll, brought home to the Cess-payer's door and made palpable, direct and immediate" (vide paras 2, 3 and 24 of the said despatch and Sir George Campbell's Proclamation of July 1873.)

(b) that regard being had to the fact that many districts of Bengal suffer from scarcity of water during the hot season involving severe sufferings upon the people and resulting in the spread of cholera and malaria, this Conference urges upon the Government the absolute necessity of sustained and systematic efforts, with a view to the removal of this want by the systematic preparation and execution of a scheme of water-supply for rural areas and this Conference, while appreciating the motives of Government, recommends that the Government be pleased not to burden the public with one-third of the costs of digging tanks and sinking wells, seeing that they already pay the Road Cess and in many instances are unable to bear such an additional burden.

(c) That in view of the fact that the Road Cess and the Public-Work Cess should be borne equally by the Boards and the Government and not in the proportion of two thirds and one-third respectively as now."

It was proposed by Babu Syamacharan Roy of Mymensingh, seconded by Babu Saratchandra Gupta of Dacca and supported by Babu Enayatali of Bhawal, Mahfazal Huq of Dewangunge, Abdulali, Jahir, Alap Singh, Abdul Rahaman of Haibatnagar. The four Mahomedan cultivators spoke feelingly about the scarcity of drinking water. They said that the whole rural population and the cattle immensely suffered during the four dry months. The two speeches visibly affected the audience. A few actually shed tears.

The Fifth Resolution ran thus

"That this Conference desires to express its profound disappointment at the general drift of the report of the Police Commission and the resolution of the Government thereon and for the following among other grounds—

(1) that the pay and prospects of Sub-Inspectors are inadequate and that the competitive test for the recruitment of Sub-Inspectors should not have been abolished but improved and rendered more effective.

(2) that the pay and prospects of the Provincial Police Service are inadequate and its status is distinctly inferior to that of the Provincial Judicial and Executive services and offers but a limited scope for the employment of educated men in the police service.

(3) that the recruitment of the Superior Police Force in England by a competitive examination from which the Indians are to be excluded is contrary to the charter, the Act of 1833 and of the Queen's Proclamation of 1858 and the invidious distinction of race opposed to the traditional policy of the British Government in the country and that this Conference firmly believes that the police administration cannot be thoroughly reformed without separating the police from magistracy and placing the Subordinate Magistrate under the District Judges."

It was proposed by Surendranath Banerjea of Calcutta, seconded by Babu Hariprasad Chatterjee of Krishnagar and supported by Babu Bijoykrishna Basu of Calcutta.

The Sixth Resolution ran thus

"That in view of the fact that Chowkidari Tax in Bengal is a most oppressive one, as every inhabitant of the village is liable to pay the rate except those who are too poor to pay half an anna a month, and that it is very harassing in its nature ; considering also the village chowkidars are now the servants of state and not of the people, this Conference prays the tax be remitted."

It was proposed by Saradaprasanna Sanyal of Krishnagar, seconded by Syed Nural Hossain Jamalpore, Babu Pramathanath Roy of Purnia, Babu Madhusudan Sarker of Serajunge, Maulvi Abdul Menan Chaudhuri of Dacca and Sheikhs Hossainabi and Ahmadali of Mymensingh.

The Seventh Resolution ran thus

"That this Conference considers that in the interest of political, sanitary, industrial, and economic education of the masses one or more properly qualified paid agent be appointed to carry on the work throughout the year in these provinces subject to the direction and control of the Mymensingh Association."

It was proposed by Maulvi Hidayatbux, seconded by Babu

Prasannakumr Basu of Tangail who, as President later on announced, offered his services to carry on the work without any remuneration ; supported by Babu Basantakumar Majumder of Noakhali.

The Eighth Resolution ran thus

“That this Conference begs to call the attention of the Government to the mortality and suffering in rural villages on account of malarial fever and cholera and prays that the Government will be pleased to take effective measures for their prevention.”

It was proposed by Hon'ble Mr. J. Chaudhuri of Calcutta, seconded by Babu Kalinarain Roy of Tangail and supported by Dewan Abdul Hakim Khan Chaudhuri of Jawar, Babu Nareshchandra Sen of Tangail.

The Ninth Resolution ran thus

(a) “That this Conference is of opinion that the principle introduced in the Bengal Local Self-Government Amendment Bill empowering His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal to impose a fresh tax by a notification in the ‘Calcutta Gazette’ is opposed to all sound principles of taxation, as it is the special function of the Legislative Council and not of the L. G. of Bengal to impose taxes.

(b) “That the tax proposed to be levied on land for Railway purposes would involve a violation of the Permanent Settlement.

(c) “That the abolition of the Sudder Local Boards would be injurious to the interests of Local Self-Government as it will deprive the people of the Sudder of the right of electing their members to the Local Boards, and also of sending elected representatives to the District Boards, and further as the chairman of these Sudder Boards, as at present constituted, are, for the most part, non-official gentlemen who by reason of their being dependent on the suffrages of the people take a special interest in these works and make these Boards self-governing bodies in the true sense of the term.

(d) “That the Union Committee, if placed directly under the District Boards will lose all its importance and usefulness as an agency of Self-Government, inasmuch as the said Committees will be entirely led and influenced by the official Chairman.

(e) “That this Conference prays that in the proposed amendment of the Local Self-Government Bill, provision may be made for further

expansion of Local Self-government by allowing selected District Boards to elect their own Chairman."

It was proposed by Anandachandra Roy of Dacca, seconded by Moulvi Mahammad Ismail of Kishoreganj and supported by Babu Purnachandra Maitra of Faridpur.

The Tenth Resolution ran as follows

"That this Conference is of opinion that the economic regeneration of this country depends on its industrial development and with that view the Conference appreciates the efforts of all movements which encourage that idea by directly aiding indigenous arts and industries and by the establishment of scholarships for the prosecution of industrial studies in countries such as Japan, America and Europe."

It was proposed by Babu Akshoykumar Majumdar of Mymensingh, seconded by Babu Jogendranath Guha Thakurta of Dacca and supported by Babu Amarchandra Datta of Mymensingh, Akhilchandra Datta of Tipperah.

Babu Amarchandra made an appeal on behalf of the Industrial Scientific Association asking the contribution of four annas each, which appeal was warmly responded to. The following resolutions were proposed from the chair and carried.

The Eleventh Resolution ran as follows

That this Conference deplores the excessive expenditure in connection with the marriages and other ceremonials in Bengal.

The Twelfth Resolution ran as follows

"That this Conference agreeing with previous Conferences, reaffirms their Resolutions on the following subjects(—)

(a) The necessity of preserving and developing indigenous arts and industries.

(b) The disastrous consequences resulting from the exclusion of the Indians from higher appointments, in the Telegraph, Police, Survey, Railway, Opium, Customs and Public Works Departments.

The Thirteenth Resolution ran as follows

"That a copy of the resolutions passed in the Conference be

forwarded to the Government of Bengal over the signature of the President."

It was proposed by Nagendrakishore Roy Choudhury of Ramgopalpore, a premier zeminder, seconded by Syed Alihossain of Basadurpore and it was carried.

Next Conference at Barisal

Babu Surendranath Sen invited the Conference at Barisal next year.

Babu Jagatkishore Acharjea proposed hearty vote of thanks to the chair. He was seconded by Babu Dwarkanath Chakravarty and Mr. Ghaznavi, which was passed amidst cheers and hurrahs.

Conclusion

The President announced that Kumar Upendra invited the volunteers to his residence. The President in concluding his address made a speech in Bengali. It was impressive and inspired the whole audience who shed tears. Hindus and Moslems joined heartily in the conference. The peasants took an active part in it. The Conference was a unique success. Zemindars worked with untiring zeal. Mymensingh imparted a new life to the organization which dragged its existence for 18 years in as much as all sections, Hindus, Mahomedans, zemindars, rayats, traders, industrial classes and members of learned professions joined hand in hand with the warmth of heart and patriotic purpose, previously, unknown in Bengal. He appealed to the Mymensingh people to contribute their mite towards defraying the expenses of sending a deputation to England, when the Secretary of the Mymensingh Association announced readiness paying 500 rupees at once and more hereafter.

With three cheers to the King-Emperor the Conference separated. The proceedings were almost in Bengali. Then the bard Durgasankar sang a political song which he did in the interior District travelling place to place, exciting a patriotic feeling among the rural population.

A mass meeting

Babu Bipinchandra Pal then addressed the masses in Bengali, explaining their duty as an individual and a member of the community and introducing questions that vitally affected them.

Some relevant information about the Conference

1. An editorial note of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* 6. 3. 1905

The Mymensingh Conference

A good deal of the energies of the promoters of the National Congress and the Provincial Conferences is taken up in selecting a President ; and yet, we think this should be the least difficult part of the programme of their work. The general idea is that a President should be either a titled man, or who has the gift of eloquence, but as the number of such persons is very limited, so, either we must make these few men preside over and over again or recruit our Presidents from other classes of people. These latter have also their special merits, which entitle them to the respect of their countrymen ; and though they may not be title-holders or good speakers, they have perhaps other qualities which compensate their shortcomings in these respects.

To our mind, any educated Indian who is a sincere patriot and has the esteem of his countrymen, for his public spirit and irreproachable character is fit for the post of a Congress or a Conference President. Much unnecessary anxiety and waste of energy would be prevented if Presidents were chosen from among these classes of men. It would also bring to the front many men of solid judgment and ardent patriotism, who have now no chance of displaying their talent and usefulness.

We have been led to the above observations by the troubles of the people of Mymensingh in securing a President for the Conference. They offered the post to two titled gentlemen ; but the latter, for reasons best known to themselves, have not been able to accept the offer. We trust, our brethren of Mymensingh will not any more fritter away their energy in this way, but apply it exclusively to real work, and select a President from among the classes noted above. Indeed, any of the names we sent them would make a good President. As we pointed out the other day, their main duty is to create enthusiasm among the people of their own district by holding public meetings in all important centres and making a permanent arrangement for the education of the masses through paid agents. We shall today lay before the public some of our ideas as to how these Provincial Conferences should be conducted and could be made really useful.

The Congress and the Provincial Conference should go hand in hand. These Conferences, from one point of view, are, however, calculated to do even greater good than the Congress itself. The Congress can deal only with imperial questions. These questions being very large require incessant agitation for years before any result could be obtained. Take for instance the reform of the Legislative Council. It has been the principal subject before the Congress. After twenty years' labour the Congress has not been able to get anything more than a mere shadow of a Representative Council.

Large questions are, however, not within the province of the Conference. It has not only to do with smaller matters, but with subjects which are pressing and concern the people immediately, and which can be easily understood by them. And as these questions do not involve any large policy of Government, the rulers may be induced by proper representation to listen to them and afford relief to people in various matters. In short, the National Congress has to address not the Viceroy, nor the Secretary of State, nor even the British Parliament but the thirty-five millions of English people; what the wishes of the Provincial Conference can be met in most cases, by the local Governors or even the District Magistrates.

It should also be borne in mind that, it is only the upper ten, or perhaps the upper five, of the educated Indian community who can be expected to take part in the Congress proceedings. But the entire people of a Province, high or low, rich and poor, may meet at a Conference, and discuss, in their own tongue, matters in which they are vitally, immediately interested.

By a few instances we shall show the nature of the work these Provincial Conferences should take up. Almost every man, except the few who live in Calcutta, pays the Road Cess. When this Cess was imposed the Government gave certain pledges in unequivocal language. Indeed this Cess is guarded by so many district pledges that the Government cannot spend a pice of the Cess Fund for its own use without committing a breach of faith. It fetches nearly half a crore of rupees per annum. But where does this vast sum go?

People are dying by lakhs annually for want of good drinking water and medical help; and the Government threatens us every now and then with fresh taxation for averting these calamities. But the Road Cess was imposed for the specific purpose of meeting these and other local needs of the villagers. There is then the Choukidari Tax. A more

cruel tax could not be conceived. The purposes for which this tax was imposed no longer exist. But we have allowed the Government to usurp both the Road Cess and Choukidari Funds, which belong to the people, without a protest!

There is not a single political body in the country which has ever raised its voice against the manner in which the proceeds of the above taxes have been misappropriated. The Government is bound to relieve the people of the Choukidari Tax, or place its proceeds in the hands of the people, now that the choukidars are servants of the officials and not of the villagers. The Government is also bound to supply the people with drinking water, for the latter pay the Road Cess ; but, though something like a water famine prevails in this province during the three or four hottest months of the year, the Government will not meet this pressing need.

The Government cannot be blamed for appropriating all these Funds. Why should they not, if they were permitted to do it ? It is all our own fault. The Bengalees have the reputation of being an intelligent nation. But they are not even aware of the fact that there are at least two Funds in the Province which are their own, and which, if properly utilized, can remove many of their wants, and that but for their apathy the Government would have never encroached upon and applied them to imperial purposes.

Then again, how many of us are aware of the deadly poison which the three measures, now before the Local Government, carry with them? The Local Self-Government Amendment Bill threatens not only to legalize all previous and future illegal applications of the Road Cess, but demolish the Sudder Local Board and thereby take away a number of elected members from the District Board, and impose a Railway Cess upon land and a Toll upon bridges. The proposed Rent Bill will widen the gulf between the landlord and the tenants still further and flood the country with ruinous litigation. And lastly, the Jute Bill will destroy the Jute industry, and do incalculable mischief to the ryots and the zemindars.

Now these are the subjects which ought to come before the Provincial Conference, and which if taken up in a proper way ought to make these bodies really useful. And imagine the importance of these subjects. If the Road Cess and the Choukidar Funds are set free and allowed to do their legitimate purposes, Bengal will practically be in a fair way to get rid of cholera and malarial fever, which have

proved its deadliest enemies and decimated many of its fairest districts. The water difficulty and the defective drainage question would also then be things of the past.

No agitation in right earnest has ever been made about these matters of supreme importance. The zemindars, the middle classes, and the ryots are, every one of them, equally interested in them. Let them therefore unite, meet at the forthcoming Conference, and devise plans for agitating these questions in a systematic and sustained manner. Let them eschew all imperial topics and confine their attention to only half a dozen subjects of purely local character. This will arouse genuine enthusiasm among the masses. The people of Mymensingh have another question to take up in which they themselves are concerned. We mean the proposed partition of their own district. They must enter a united protest against such a proposal ; and for, if they have now some strength, it is because they are four millions strong ; but they will lose all their prosperity and vitality, if they allow themselves to be cut into two.

2. Draft Resolutions

The following are the draft resolutions proposed to be placed before the forthcoming Provincial Conference to be held at Mymensingh for its consideration:

- I. That this Conference views with grave alarm and anxiety the Jute Bill which has been submitted to the Government by one class of the mercantile community of Calcutta and which in the opinion of this Conference is calculated to seriously injure this important industry of Bengal and specially of the Mymensingh district. This Conference earnestly prays that the said Bill be altogether abandoned.
- II That this Conference agrees with the views expressed in Government Resolution Education No 658 in thinking that the courses of instruction followed in Primary Schools are too diversified for the agricultural classes but at the same time this Conference feels that it is not able to give adequate expression to the feeling of apprehension which the proposals to divide the Bengali language, into "Northern, Eastern, Central and Western Bengali at least," has evoked throughout the country

amongst all classes of the people. This Conference, while deprecating the use of Sanskritised language in text books intended for rural schools, firmly believes that although the spoken language is different in different Districts and in different parts of the same District, books written in simple Bengali to be understood by all classes. This Conference thinks that the introduction of spoken dialects in text-books will be treated with utter disapproval by the very classes who speak those dialects, and will therefore completely defeat the object which the Government has in view.

- III. That this Conference while expressing its gratitude to the Government for contribution from the Provincial funds to remove the great scarcity of drinking water, desires to place on record its deep regret for the nonfulfilment of the assurance, which His Grace the Duke of Argyll, as Secretary of State for India, gave at the time of the imposition of Road Cess, for removing scarcity of drinking water. This Conference submits that funds annually allotted by District Boards together with the recent contribution made by the Government are too inadequate to supply vast areas in the interior with good drinking water.
- IV. That having regard to the present constitution of village choudidari and their gradual amalgamation with the regular police force, this Conference prays that the Choudidari tax which is a source of great oppression and hardship to rural people be abolished.
- V. That this Conference begs to call attention of the Government to the mortality and suffering in rural villagers on account of malarial fever and cholera. The Conference prays that steps be taken to adopt such measure as the Government thinks proper to remove them.
- VI. That this Conference begs also to call attention to the destruction of crops and human lives by wild animals in hilly and jungly tracts of Bengal on account of the rigour of the Arms Act as well as of the increasing difficulties to obtain licenses under it.
- VII. That this Conference fully appreciates the work which is being done by the Scientific and Industrial Association of Calcutta and resolves to co-operate with it and advance its

object, and desires to express to gratitude to the promoters of the Association, and to His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal who has lent encouragement to the Association by his presence at its meeting.

- VIII That this Conference is of opinion that any scheme in any form whatsoever of dividing the Bengali-speaking people and thereby retarding its gradual development, should be abandoned for ever and prays that if any new scheme, as hinted in the newspapers, has been framed it should be published with all papers relating thereto and that no final orders passed until the public have had an opportunity of discussing it.
- IX (a) That this Conference is of opinion that the new principle introduced in the Bengal Local Self-Government Amendment Bill empowering His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal to impose a fresh tax by a notification in the "Calcutta Gazette" is against all sound principles of taxation.
- (b) That the proposed fresh tax on land will greatly increase the burden of the people who are already overtaxed and who will be the least benefited by it.
- (c) That the imposition of a fresh tax on land will be regarded as a violation of the Permanent Settlement.
- (d) That in the opinion of this Conference the Sadar Local Boards are doing very useful work and the members thereof take great interest in the transaction of the business of the Boards inasmuch as the Sadar Local Boards are generally presided over by non-official Chairmen.
- (e) That the said Boards may not be abolished.
- (f) That the Union Committee, if placed directly under the District Boards, will lose all its importance and usefulness as an agency of Self-Government inasmuch as the said Committees will be entirely led and influenced by the official Chairmen.
- X. That this Conference deplores the increasing distress of the middle classes in the Maffassil which in the opinion of this Conference is mainly due to
- (a) the gradual exclusion from several Departments of Government Service,

- (b) the great increase of expenditure in marriages and other ceremonials and also to the increased expenditure in all matters of daily life as well as to the increase of litigation,
 - (c) Malaria fever and other diseases.
- XI. That this Conference, agreeing with previous Conferences, reaffirms their Resolutions on the following subjects:
- (a) The separation of judicial and executive functions.
 - (b) The expansion of Local Self-Government by allowing selected District Boards to elect their own Chairman.
 - (c) The necessity of preserving and developing indigenous arts and industries.
 - (d) The disastrous consequences resulting from the gradual exclusion of the Indians from appointment in the Telegraph, Police, Survey, Railway, Opium, Customs, Public Works Departments.
 - (e) The non-observance of the Queen's Proclamation.
- XII That this Conference is of opinion that the Competitive Examination is the best system for appointment in the public service. This Conference humbly prays that the Government may be pleased to consider this matter and introduce the same system of appointment in the Provincial Service as exists in regard to appointments in the Civil Service. This Conference is also of opinion that any other system of appointment, except competitive examination, will fail to command the respect and confidence of the public.

3. An Editorial note of the *The Bengalee* on 9.4. 1905

For the past few days we have been daily publishing telegraphic reports of meetings, held at important towns all over the Province, for the purpose of electing delegates to the Provincial Conference which holds its sittings at Mymensingh during the approaching Easter Holidays. These reports, brief as they are, bear ample evidence of the enthusiastic character of the gatherings the proceedings of which are chronicled therein and justify the hope that the next Conference will not be less successful than any of its numerous predecessors. The people of Mymensingh are pre-eminently distinguished for their patriotism and public-spirited activity and they gave a signal proof of their power of

organization in connection with the meetings which were held throughout East Bengal to protest against the partition scheme, on the occasion of the Viceroy's visit to some of the threatened districts about a year ago. The Conference will have an important and interesting adjunct Exhibition which is to be held under the auspices of the local Saraswat Samiti. We have reason to believe that the number of delegates will be exceptionally large this year, and in the Hon'ble Babu Bhupendranath Basu the Conference has secured a President who will most worthily fill that high and onerous position.

East Bengal is the home of the Jute industry which has played no unimportant part in promoting its prosperity. To this industry, therefore, is appropriately assigned the place of honour in the list of draft Resolutions which have been framed and already published in these columns. It is true that the Jute Bill, the parentage of which belongs to the Narayangunge Chamber of Commerce which is composed, we believe, of European merchants and speculators interested in the jute industry, is still in a nebulous state, and it is by no means certain yet whether it will be approved of by the Government and placed on the Legislative anvil. But to be forewarned is to be forearmed and as there can be no doubt that a measure of the kind suggested by the Narayangunj Chamber of Commerce will prejudicially affect the jute industry by adding to the hardships and difficulties of the cultivators, we think the promoters of the Conference have wisely resolved to place the threatened measure in the forefront of their programme. It will certainly benefit the exporters, but only at the expense of the cultivators. The next Resolution condemns the proposal for the introduction of spoken dialects in the text-books to be used in the primary schools. We observe that the Hon'ble Mr. K. G. Gupta, the only Indian member of the Committee with whom this proposal has originated, made a somewhat halting and apologetic reference to it in the course of his observations on the Budget at the last meeting of the Provincial Legislative Council. He said that it was possible that the Committee had erred in making this proposal but their motive at any rate was a most laudable one, being the removal of the obstacles that stood in the way of the education of peasant boys. We hope the Hon'ble Mr. Gupta has been an attentive reader of the criticisms which the Committee's proposal has elicited in authoritative quarters, for in that case he cannot have failed to be convinced of its absurdity and injurious character. The peasant lad feels no difficulty whatever in

understanding chaste Bengali and does not stand in need of a "royal road" of the kind with which the Committee were so anxious to provide him. The next Resolution dwells upon the inadequacy of the resources of the District Boards, which is practically admitted by the Government of India in the recent grant of a contribution to the District Boards, and complaint of the non-fulfilment of the pledge to remove the scarcity of drinking water, which was given at the time of the imposition of the Road Cess. Among other Resolutions, we note a prayer for the abolition of the chowkidari tax which is perhaps the most cruel form of taxation known in India, as it does not spare even the poorest, and an appeal to the Government to take effective measures to check the ravages caused by malarial fever and cholera. From one end of the Province to the other the cry goes forth "Give us water to drink and save us from the grip of fever and cholera." How long will the authorities resist this piteous appeal? A healthy peasantry, its country's pride, once destroyed, can never be replaced. We propose to notice the other resolutions on a future occasion, but meanwhile we appeal to those towns that have not yet elected their delegates to supply the omission at the earliest opportunity. The Provincial Conference is an institution that has already struck a deep root in the soil and the time is not distant when its deliberations will exercise a potent voice in shaping the policy and the measures of the Government.

4. Election of Delegates

From Anantganj

A meeting was held at Anantganj on 1st Baisak. It represented all classes of men, chiefly tradesmen and peasants. Babu Durgadas Chakravarty took the chair. A unanimous protest was raised against the Jute Bill and the Chowkidari Tax. Four delegates have been elected.

From Ashujia

A largely attended meeting was held at Ashujia to elect delegates and collect subscriptions for the Conference. Babu Ramnath Chakravarty presided. The meeting strongly protested against the partition question, the division of language, the proposed Jute Bill and the proposed Railway Tax. Ten delegates were elected.

From Barisal

The people of several villages met at Barisal on the 16th April to elect delegates to the Conference. Protests were made against the Partition of Bengal, the Jute Bill and the division of the Bengali Language.

From Bagerhat

At a meeting of the People's Association Bagerhat, Babus Umacharan Sen, Bidhubhushan Ghosh, Girischandra Sen, Girischandra Das, pleaders, Babu Brojendralal Sen, Muktear, and Babu Suklal Nag, Zemindar, have been elected delegates to the Mymensingh Conference.

From Bajitpore

At a public meeting held in the local school house at the instance of the Bajitpore Association 46 delegates, representing all interests of the Chowki, were elected to the Provincial Conference at Mymensingh.

From Bansibangali

A meeting of shopkeepers, mahajans, talukdars and cultivators was held at the school house at Bansibangali. Babu Phanibhushan Chaki took the chair. The meeting while expressing gratitude at the reduction of the Salt Tax, strongly protested against the Jute Act, Partition of Bengal and change in the Bengali Language.

From Bhawanipur

All grades of people of Bhawanipur, Bajitpour convened a public meeting there on Saturday last, expressed sympathy with the works of the Conference and entered protests against the proposed Jute Legislation and the introduction of the District or Provincial Colloquials in the primary schools. Delegates were elected.

From Bhagalpore

At a public meeting held at the Bar Library under the presidency of Babu Upendrachandra Mukherjee, the following delegates were elected:—

Mr. Dipnarain Singh, Babus Dinabandhu Banerjee, Harendralal Roy, Motilal Misra, Lalitmohan Ghosh, Charuchandra Basu, Moulvi

Shahamat Hossein, Babus Upendranath Bagchi, Saradamohan Bhattacharjya and Upendrachandra Mukherjee.

From Bhairab

(a)

A large number of influential people attended meeting of the various communities of Bhairab Bazar was held on the 27th March evening in the local school house to elect delegates and to collect subscriptions for the Provincial Conference. The trading concerns were strongly represented. Ten delegates were elected.

(b)

The 'gurus' of the several 'pathsalas' in the jurisdiction of the Bhairab outpost met at the local M. G. School to protest against resolution on the division of the Bengali Language in the primary standards. They deprecated the scheme and elected delegates to attend the Provincial Conference at Mymensingh.

From Bhatail

A public meeting of the inhabitants of Bhatail and other adjoining villages was held to sympathise with the Conference. The meeting strongly protested against the proposal of splitting up the Bengali Language and the proposed Jute Bill which would be ruinous to the peasants. Two Mahomedan delegates were appointed.

From Bhawal

The people of Bhawal in the Dacca District, at a public meeting, elected some 26 delegates to the Conference. The meeting was quite representative.

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From Burdwan

At a public meeting, held at the Taylor Memorial Hall, of the residents of Burdwan, the following gentlemen have been elected to represent the District in the Mymensingh Provincial Conference.

Rai Nalinaksha Basu Bahadur; Babu Saratchandra Basu B. L.; Babu Amarnath Datta B. I. ; Maulvi Abdul Kasem B. A ; Babu Bipinbihari Ghosh M. A. B. L.; Babu Mohinimohan Mitra M. A. B. L.; Babu

Rakhalchandra Das B L; Babu Taraprasanna Mukherjee B. L.; Dr. Jagabandhu Mitra; Babu Amulya Deb Pathak B. L.; Babu Manmathakumar Chatterjee; Babu Banwarilal Chaudhuri M. A. B. L.

From Chaiani

Nearly five hundred people of the thirty villages of Mouzas Chaiani, Bargharia, Sudi and Namsri assembled together to protest against the proposed Jute Bill and any other additional tax and expressed hearty co-operation with the Conference. Four delegates were elected. The people of all villages in the Mouzas will pray for the success of the Conference.

From Chandiber

A public meeting was held at Chandiber within Police Outpost Bhairab in Mymensingh to elect delegates to the Mymensingh Provincial Conference. There was a large gathering, mostly of agriculturists. Babu Anukulchandra Roy presided.

From Chandpur

At a largely attended public meeting held in the local Bar Library under the Presidency of Babu Chandrakisore Ghosh, senior pleader, 26 delegates have been elected to represent the Chandpur Sub-division in the Bengal Provincial Conference at Mymensingh.

From Chandrakona

A public meeting was held at Kenchkapur through the exertions of Babu Nageswar Singh, Zemindar and Secretary of the Kenchkapur Hitakarini Sava to elect delegates to the Bengal Provincial Conference. Babu Pyarilal Ghosh and Amalkrishna Mukherjee were elected.

From Chilkari

A largely attended meeting of cultivators was held at Chilkari under the presidency of Moulvi Afsar Ahmed. The meeting strongly protested against the proposed Jute Bill and the Chowkidari Tax.

From Comilla

At a meeting of the People's Association representing all sections of the community held in the local Town Hall, ten delegates were elected to the Bengal Provincial Conference. It was resolved also to send a memorial protesting against the division of the Bengali dialect.

From Dacca

At a public meeting held at the Ukil's Institution, Dacca, 80 delegates were elected to the Conference at Mymensingh.

From Dadra

A largely attended meeting was held on the 6th April at Dadra. The people of the neighbouring villages attended. Babu Prasannakumar Bhattacharjee presided. The meeting strongly protested against the partition of Bengal, the division of the Bengali Language, the Jute Bill and the Chowkidari Tax. Four Mahomedan delegates to the Conference were elected.

From Dhaki

The gentry and peasantry of Dhaki, Bajitpur held a mass meeting there, indicated sympathy with the Conference and disapproved of the brand new scheme of the lower education. Two delegates were elected to be present at the Provincial Conference.

From Dhalla

On the 16th April the people of Dhalla met under the presidency of the local Zemindar, Babu Prasannakumar Chakravarty, to elect delegates to the Conference. Protests were made against Jute Bill, Chowkidari Tax, and division of Bengali Language. Both Hindus and Mahomedans attended the meeting. Great enthusiasm prevailed.

From Dhariswar

A largely attended meeting of the gentry, cultivators and other classes of people of Jarintala, Atharbaria, Kamalpur, Mamadpur etc., was held at Dhariswar in the house of Moulvi Syed Mohamed Abdul Manayam, late Sub-Inspector of schools, on the 6th April at 2 p. m. for the election

of delegates to attend the Provincial Conference at Mymensingh and raising subscriptions to support the same. Babu Dwarkanath Sen, the Muktear, Mymensingh was unanimously elected president of the meeting. On the draft resolutions of the said Conference being explained to the public by Babu Kalinath De, late teacher of the Bajitpur High School, and Babu Syamacharan Chakravarty, Civil Hospital Assistant, and some others, the meeting approved of the usefulness of such a Conference. A large sum was subscribed then and there. Babu Adharnath Sen B. L., pleader, Babu Saratchandra De Roy, Muktear, Babu Sasimohan Roy, Babu Bipinchandra Laskar, Babu Kaminikumar De Roy, and Moulvi Syed Md. Abdul Manayam were appointed delegates.

From Diamond Harbour

At a public meeting held here on the 9th April in Branch Indian Association Hall, at Diamond Harbour under the presidency of Pandit Rakhalchandra Tewari Nagaratna Rai Bahadur to elect delegates to the Provincial Conference at Mymensingh, the following gentlemen were elected who will discuss about the Jute Bill, the Rural Education scheme and also repeated changes of District Judge of the 24 Parganas which caused hardship upon the pleaders, suitors and amlahs:—

Babus Ramtaran Banerjee, B. L., Biswanath Bose M. A. B. L., Hemnath Ghosh, B. L., Dr. Nilratan Sircar M. D., Babus Sasibhusan Sirkar B. L., Paushnath Roychoudhury B.L., Chandrakumar Bhattacharjee, B. L., Janakinath Roy, B. L., Bipinbehari Dey, B. L., Nrityagopal Mitra, B.L., Jogeschandra Nagchoudhury, Kshetranath Banerjee B. L., Bamanath Singha, B. L.

From Dighaputt

A meeting consisting of the gentry and the peasants of Dighaphutt in Jamalpur was held under the presidency of Babu Jagadananda Bhowmik. The meeting strongly protested against the Jute Bill and the present changes in the curriculum of primary education. The peasants are panic stricken at the changes.

From Faridpore

The villagers of Faridpore, Kiderpur, Matikata, Bahirchar met at Faridpore in large numbers. They unanimously recorded resolutions against the proposed lower primary texts. Three delegates were elected for the Conference.

From Fatchpur Bazar

An open air public meeting was held at Fatchpur Bazar in Sararchar on Tuesday evening under the presidency of Babu Satischandra Roychowdhury. All classes of people, including artisans, shop-keepers, cultivators and talukdars attended. Resolutions were adopted against the Jute Bill and the dismemberment of the Bengali Language. Delegates were elected to the Mymensingh Conference.

From Gangatia

A meeting to explain the usefulness of the Conference and to collect subscriptions was held at Gangatia. It was largely attended by people from all the adjoining villages, Babu Isanchandra Chakravarty presided. He explained the objects of the Conference. The audience gladly responded to the call for subscriptions. Fifty delegates were appointed.

From Gobindapur

At a meeting held at Gobindapur, a strong protest against the Jute Bill, the division of the Bengali Language and the partition of Bengal was made. Four delegates were elected to the Mymensingh Conference. The meeting expressed full sympathy with the Conference. Babu Nadiabasi Shaha presided.

From Gouripur

A crowded meeting, representing Zemindars, Talukdars, Bankers, Traders, Agricultural classes of this quarter, was held on the 6th April at 4 p. m. at Gouripur under the presidency of Babu Nagendrakisore Roychowdhury, Zemindar, son of Ray Jogendrakisore Roychowdhury Bahadur of Ramgopalpur, to sympathise with the objects of the Bengal Provincial Conference, at Mymensingh. Great enthusiasm prevailed.

From Hilachia

On Sunday last, at Hilachia Bazar, the people of Goorti, Hilachia, Parabajipur, Doulatpur, Noakandi, Sathoota, Barmaipur, Chhathikomla, numbering nearly 300, mustered strong, thanked the Government for the reduction of the salt duty, disapproved of the partition of Bengal and the Jute Bill and the linguistic innovation in the Lower Primary schools and elected delegates to the Mymensingh Conference.

From Itna

A largely and influentially attended meeting of all classes was held at Itna in the house of the Dewan Sahab last evening to elect delegates to the Provincial Conference. 10 delegates were elected and subscriptions were realised. Much enthusiasm prevailed.

From Jafrabaj

A good many persons representing the different interests of Jafrabaj within Bajitpore met together and approved of the Conference propaganda, opposed the Jute Bill and the division of Bengal. They thanked the Government on the reduction of duty on salt. Three delegates were elected for the Conference.

From Jagannathpur

A largely-attended public meeting was held at Jagannathpur within police out-post Bhairab in Mymensingh, to elect delegates to the Mymensingh Provincial Conference. Six delegates were elected. Babu Chandrakishore Kar presided. The meeting strongly protested against the partition of Bengal, the proposed Jute Bill and the division of the language.

From Jamalpur

A largely and influentially attended meeting of the residents of Jamalpur expressed their cordial sympathy with the Conference. A strong committee was formed to collect subscriptions for the Conference. Forty-eight delegates were elected. A large sum was collected on the spot.

From Jasodal

A public meeting was held at Jasodal under the presidency of Babu Syamsundar Goswami, B. L. Resolutions were adopted, given expression to the alarm and consternation caused to the people of this province by the proposed break-up of Bengal and the Bengali language, the Jute Bill and the Local Self-government Amendment Act, and praying the Government through the agency of the ensuing Provincial Conference to take suitable steps for supplying good drinking water in the Mofussil and appointing delegates to the conference. All classes of people attended the meeting. Great enthusiasm prevailed.

From Kaijuri (Mymensingh)

A meeting of influential Talukdars and Merchants was held at Kaijuri, Tangail, under the Presidency of Babu Kisorimohan Neogi. Babu Pyarimohan Neogi explained the benefit of scientific and agricultural education. Three resolutions were passed sympathising with the Provincial Conference and Saraswat Sammilani at Mymensingh and three delegates were appointed.

From Kalikaprasad

A meeting was held at Kalikaprasad within the outpost of Bhairab in Mymensingh in the premises of Moulavi Shamsaruddin Ahammed, a big Talukdar, to elect delegates to the Mymensingh Provincial Conference. 10 delegates were elected. The Jute cultivators have been greatly alarmed at the proposed Jute Bill.

From Kapasatia

At a meeting held at Kapasatia, resolutions were passed against the Jute Bill, the introduction of the Provincial patois in the Lower Primary Schools, and the partition of Bengal. Delegates were elected for the ensuing conference at Mymensingh.

From Baniagram

Under the presidency of Pandit Nandakumar Kabyatirtha a large meeting was held of the people of the village of Madhyapara,

Baniagram and other adjacent villages of Baniagram on the 16th April 1905, to elect delegates to the Provincial Conference at Mymensingh. Babu Adharnath Sen, B. L., Pleader, Judge's Court, Mymensingh explained the objects of the meeting. 13 delegates were elected.

From Katihali

The people of the several villages at Katihali within Thana Kendua in Mymensingh met under the presidency of Babu Bhābanikishore Bhattacharjee to elect delegates to the Conference and to consider the effect of the Jute Bill and the new scheme of rural education. Resolutions were adopted, praying government to abandon both. Seven delegates were elected to attend the Provincial Conference at Mymensingh.

From Kayestha-Palli (Kishoregunge)

An open-air meeting largely attended by peasants, was held at Kayestha-Palli on the 16th April. Babus Jogendrakishore Roy, Surendrakishore Roy, Srishchandra Roy and Hemchandra Roy were elected delegates to the Mymensing Conference.

From Kendua

A public meeting of the Barari-Mymensingh Jnan Bidhaini Association was held under the Presidency of Pandit Baradakanta Siddantabhushan for the election of delegates to the Provincial Conference. Gentlemen, traders, shopkeepers and farmers were present. The meeting expressed full sympathy with the object of the Conference. Babus Rameschandra Patranavis and Tarakeswar Patranavis have been elected delegates.

From Khaparkona

A large meeting was held at Khaparkona on the 12th April to elect delegates to the Conference. Both the gentry and the peasant class attended in large numbers, when the proposed Jute Bill was explained. There was seen great consternation among the former.

From Khulna

The people's Association have elected Babus Nagendranath Sen, B. L., Rashbehari Sen and Charuchandra Nag, M. A. B. L., delegates to the Bengal Provincial Conference. Great enthusiasm prevails. The delegates start for Mymensingh on Wednesday.

From Kokdahare (Tangail)

A public meeting was held at Kokdahare under the presidency of Babu Gopalchandra Rai. Resolutions protesting against the Bengal partition and the Jute legislation were adopted. Messrs Abdul Halam Ghaznavi, Abdul Hamed Khan, Babus Anathbandhu Guha, Kuladacharan Munshi, Pareshchandra Lahiri, Ramanikanta Khasnabis, Ambikacharan Nyayratna, Satischandra Kabiratna, Anandachandra Kabiraj, Saratchandra, Madhusudan, and Rajanikanta Chakravarti, Saratchandra and Rajendralal Banik were elected delegates to the Mymensingh Conference.

From Krishnagore

The following gentlemen have been elected delegates to the Bengal Provincial Conference at Mymensingh during the Easter holidays:-

Mr. T. Banerjee, Babus Hariprosad Chatterji, Panchanan Sen, Sarodaprasad Sanyal and Jnanendranath Ghosh.

From Kuliarchar

At a meeting, held at Kuliarcharbazar, Bajitpur, strong protests against the Jute Bill, the division of the Bengali language and of Bengal were made. Three delegates were elected to the Provincial Conference at Mymensingh.

From Kumaruell

A public meeting was held at the Kumaruell M. E. School premises on the 8th instant at 2 p.m. for the election of delegates to the Provincial Conference. Babu Lokenath Chaudhury, a well-known Talukdar of the locality, presided. The audience represented all sections of the Community. The meeting opened with an expression of sincere gratitude to the Government for the further reduction of duty on salt

and for the munificent grant of twenty lakhs of rupees for the cause of primary education, and the advancement and amelioration of agriculture and industries. The proposed Jute Bill, the publication of books for primary education in at least four Provincial dialects and the partition question caused great alarm amongst the audience. The following gentlemen were elected delegates:

Babus Mukundachandra Choudhury, B. A., Satishchandra Choudhury Kavibhusan, Maheshchandra Mazumdar, B. A. Satishchandra Mazumdar, Saratchandra Sarkar, Umeshchandra Roy, Chandranath Motayed.

From Kushtia

At a public meeting held here last week, Babus Sureshchandra Chatterjee, Raicharan Das, Hridoy Nath Mazumdar, Durgadas Banerji, Basantakurnar Chatterji and Bishamber Roy, B. L., were elected delegates to the Bengal Provincial Conference at Mymensingh.

From Lantiabararipara

A mass meeting was held at Lantiabararipara to sympathise with the Conference. Babu Dwarakanath Mazumdar presided. The meeting strongly protested against the threatened Jute Act and the Arms Act which was the cause of the loss of many lives in these jungly parts. Fourteen delegates were appointed.

From Mahinanda (Mymensingh)

A meeting, largely attended by peasants was held at Mahinanda in Kishorigunge to express sympathy with the Conference. The meeting was presided over by Babu Anandachandra Bhattacharji. Twelve delegates were elected. Great enthusiasm prevailed. The peasants subscribed largely and strongly urged the President to hold another meeting.

From Mahiramkul

A meeting was held at Mahiramkul on the 27th Chaitra under the presidency of Babu Gangeschandra Bandyopadhyaya. Eight delegates were elected to attend the Mymensingh Conference.

From Masua (Mymensingh)

A meeting strongly representative of Zemindars and peasants, were held at Masua, presided over by Babu Narendrakishore Roy Choudhury, Zemindar. Babu Sailendrakishore Rai explained the usefulness of the Conference. Four resolutions were passed. The meeting strongly protested against the partition of Bengal and the threatened changes in the primary Education and the Jute Bill.

From Metropolitan Electoral Division

The following gentlemen have been elected delegates to represent the Metropolitan Electoral Division at the Provincial Conference at Mymensingh on the 22nd and 23rd April.

Hon'ble Mr. B. N. Basu, Messrs Surendranath Banerjea, Lalmohan Ghosh, Narendranath Sen, Matilal Ghosh and J. Ghosal, Hon'ble Babu Nalinbehari Sircar, Messrs Sourendranath Tagore, Jatindranath Tagore, Rabindranath Tagore, Sudhindranath Tagore, A. Choudhury, Hon'ble Mr. J. Choudhury, Messrs Radhamohan Kar, Hirendranath Dutta, Rai Jatindranath Choudhury, Mr. Bepinchandra Pal, Drs. Nilratan Sirkar, Haridhone Dutt, R. G. Kar, Messrs Prithwischandra Roy, Charuchandra Ghose, Saratchandra Mazumdar, Kedarnath Das Gupta, Abinaschandra Ghosh, Jogendrakrishna Das, Mohinimohan Kar, Krishnakumar Mitter, Panchkowri Banerjee, Nandakishore Mitter, Kaviraj Upendranath Sen, Mr. T. P. Mitra, Dr. S. K. Mullick Messrs Pejushkanti Ghosh, Basantakumar Bose, Promothanath Sen, Lalmohan Dass, Dwarkanath Chakravarty, Promothanath Roy Choudhury, Rai Pashupatinath Bose, Messrs A. C. Banerjee, J. N. Roy, Jogendranath Ghosh, Nagendranath Gupta, H. C. Mallick, S. K. Mallick, Upendranath Sen.

- *From Midnapur*

At a public meeting held at Midnapur, Babus Pyarilal Ghosh, Bankimchandra Ghosh, Lalitmohan Basu, Trailokyanath Pal, Upendranath Ghosh, Jnanendranath Sen, Mohantabharat Ramannuj Das of Chandrakona and Jnanendranath Basu have been elected delegates to the Mymensingh Conference.

From Muktagacha

An open air public meeting was held at the instance of Babu Brojendranarayan Acharya Choudhuri, Zemindar and Honorary Magistrate on the dispensary ground under the presidency of Babu Barodakrishna Acharjya Choudhury, zemindar. It was largely attended by Zemindars, Talukdars, Merchants, Traders, Agriculturists and others. Both Hindus and Mohamedans supported Provincial Conference and appointed delegates thereto. The meeting respectfully protested against the proposed Jute legislation and the Government policy of splitting up the Bengali language into innumerable local dialects and expressed disappointment at the Government Resolution on the Police Commissioner's report. It also appointed a sub-committee for collecting subscriptions for the Provincial Conference and adopted a draft memorial to be presented to Government and at the same time gratefully acknowledged the government action in further reducing the salt tax. Great enthusiasm prevailed.

From Mursidabad.

The Mursidabad Association this day elected Babus Baikuntanath Sen, Anandacharan Chakraverty, Nafardas Roy, Bhabanikishore Chakravarty, Pramathanath Bhadra, Asutosh Mojumdar, Satyendranarayan Bagchi, Srishchandra Sarbadhikari and Munshi Emazuddin delegates to the Mymensingh Provincial Conference.

From Nagarkurati

A grand meeting was held at Nagarkurati (Mymensingh), on the 31st ultimo. About two thousand people were present. Babu Haranath Sen Choudhury took the chair. The public showed a keen interest in the Mymensingh Provincial Conference. Several delegates were elected.

From Nagarpur

A largely attended meeting was held at Nagarpur to sympathise with the Mymensingh Conference. Delegates were elected. Great enthusiasm prevailed. Protests were made against the Jute Bill and division of the Bengali language.

From Naraingunge

(a)

The Naraingunge Bar elected is delegates to the Mymensingh Conference.

(b)

A public meeting was held on Friday the 7th April 1905 at Naraingunge. There was great popular enthusiasm. Babu Srinath Sen, retired Deputy Magistrate, presided, for election of delegates to the Mymensingh Conference.

The following delegates were elected to the Mymensingh Conference to represent the people of Naraingunge:—

Babus Sarbamohan Chakravarty, Bhubaneswar Dhar, Jagatbandhu Dutta, Lalitchandra Dutt, Taranicharan Saha, Nandakumar Choudhuri, Kumudinikanta Roy, Chandicharan Sen, Harachandra Nandi, Prankumar Das, Kaminikumar Roy, Rakhalchandra Banikya, Mukundalal Das, Debendrachandra Roy, Munshi Pirmahomad, Babu Shasibhusan Saha, Lalbehari Bose, Jatindramohan Das, Harendralal Ganguly, Munshi Nabi Nez Chowdhuri, Babus Manmohan Dhar, Preonath Bose, Fanindra Dasgupta, Purnachandra Gupta, Jagatchandra Sen, Jatindrachandra Chakravarty, Jamininath Chanda, Mohendranath Dhar, Debendranath Sarkar, Sourishchandra Chatterjee, Manmohan Mitra, Hemchandra Banerjee, Harkumar Dey, Kunjabehari Guha, Chandramohan Saha, Radhaballav Saha, Jogeshchandra Sen, Lalitchandra Ghosh, Upendrakumar Mitra, Gopalchandra Roy, Nishikanta Chakravarty, Nilratan Mukherjee.

From Narendia

A large and influentially attended meeting was held at Narendia in Tangail. The meeting strongly protested against the proposed changes in Primary Education and the Jute Bill. The meeting also expressed their strong disappointment at the resolution of the Government upon the Police Commission. Delegates were appointed for the conference.

From Netrokona

A meeting was held at Rajdeotala in Netrokona for appointing delegates to the Mymensingh Conference. About 200 people were present. Dewan Mahammad Kamilt Choudhury presided. There was one voice in protesting against the various measures of the Government. Six delegates were chosen.

From Nitarkandi

At a public meeting held at Nitarkandi in Bijetpur on the 1st April, the people of Pailanpur, Nitarkandi, Latiarkandi, Hindus and Mohamedans, unanimously passed resolutions, advocating the cause of the ensuing Provincial Conference. They strongly deprecated the proposed break-up of the Bengali language and the proposed Jute legislation. Four delegates were elected.

From Noakhali

The following gentlemen have been elected delegates to the Mymensingh Conference to represent the people of Noakhali

Babu Radhakanta Aich, Rajmohan Mukherjee, Jasodakumar Ghosh, Akshaykumar Chakravarty, Pleaders, and Hemchandra Das Choudhury, Zemindar.

From Parjoar (Dacca)

At a meeting of the representatives of the people of Parjoar, held in the Jagannath College on the 15th April, the following gentlemen were elected delegates to the Provincial Conference. Rai Sahib Durgakumar Basu, Babus Bejoygopal Basu, Upendrachandra Gupta B. L., Jnanchandra Basu, Paresnath Ghosh, Dakshinacharan Rai, Sanyasicharan Roy, Rebatikanta Basu, Rai Kishor Majumdar M. A., B. L., Lalitkishore Roy, Lalitchandra Datta M. A. Govindachandra Datta and Harendrakumar Guha.

From Patriotic Association (Calcutta)

A special meeting of the Patriotic Association was held at the club premises and the following delegates are elected to represent them at the Mymensingh Conference:—

Honourable Babu Bhupendrnath Bose, Babus Surendranath Banerjea, Narendranath Sen, Purnachandra Coomer, Ranlal Shaw, Satishchandra Chowdhury. Kalicharan Coomer, Nagendranath Banerjee, Pandit Kaliprasanna Kabyabisarad and Dr. H.Paul.

From Pingua

There have been held six meetings in the Pingua quarter to send delegates and collect subscriptions. At all the meetings the peasants

persistently protested against the Jute-Bill. Fifty rupees were collected as subscriptions from the peasants alone.

From Purnia

At a public meeting held at the Bar Library Hall to-day, Babus Jogendranath Mukherjee, M. A., B. L., Jyotishchandra Bhattacharjee M. A., B. L., Ramprasad B. L., and Syed Golam Hyder were elected delegates to the Mymensingh Provincial Conference.

From Putijana (Mymensingh)

A meeting of Talukdars and other influential residents of Devagram, Putijana and other adjoining villages was held at Putijana under the Presidency of Babu Mohesh Chandra Roy on the 29th March. The Talukdars asked for the hearty co-operation of the peasants who largely attended the meeting.

From Ramdi

The people of Ramdi, Agarpur and Bijitpur, in Mymensingh, assembled in a public meeting, resolved that they had full and hearty sympathy for the Provincial Conference at Mymensingh. The gathering was very large, masses of cultivators participating. Strong indignation was expressed against the proposed Jute Bill. Delegates were elected and subscriptions collected.

From Ramgopalpur

An open-air meeting was held today in the school compound under the presidency of Babu Nagendrakishore Rai Choudhury, a local Zemindar. The meeting was largely attended by talukdars, merchants, agriculturists, both Hindus and Mohamedans. Delegates were appointed to the Provincial Conference at Mymensingh. The meeting respectfully protested against the proposed Jute Bill and the proposal of the Government to split up the Bengali language into numerous local dialects as well as the proposed partition of Bengal. The meeting further expressed gratitude to the Government for the reduction of the salt-tax.

From Rampore

A largely-attended meeting was held at Ashiyia (Mymensing) in the house of Pandit Ranidas Tarkapanchanan on the 10th April, to elect delegates to and to collect subscriptions for the Mymensingh Provincial Conference. Babu Ramnath Chakravarty presided. Babu Chandrakumar Bhattacharjee delivered a long speech, strongly protesting against the Bengal Partition question, division of language, the proposed Jute Bill and the proposed Railway tax. Ten delegates have been elected. Babu Chandrakumar Bhattacharjee has been appointed to collect subscriptions,

From Rangpore

At a public meeting held at the Public Library the following gentlemen were elected delegates to the Provincial Conference:—

Babus Umakanta Das, Satischandra Roy, Satischandra Chakravarty, Panchanan Sirkar, Chandicharan Roy Chaudhury, Nripendrachandra Rudra, Jatindranath Roy Choudhury, Zemindars.

From Rupakhali

A meeting to sympathise with the conference was held at Rupakhali. It was composed mostly of cultivators. On the motion of Maulvi Baktar Ahmed Mia, Babu Kshetramohan Prabat took the chair. Babus Rebatikishore Roy and Karticchandra Sanyal, explained the objects of the meeting. Four gentlemen were elected delegates to the Conference.

From Sadhuhati (Jessore)

A largely attended meeting was held on the 14th April at the Sadhuhati school premises under the presidency of Babu Barodaprasad Banerji. Many respectable gentlemen of the place and the adjoining villages were present. Babu Atulchandra Mukherjee, B. A., spoke, protesting against the Government resolution to break up the Bengali language into different local dialects and Local Self-government Amendment Bill. Babu Girjabhusan Chatterji, Zemindar and Honorary Magistrate, who had been elected a delegate to the Provincial Conference at Mymensingh, dealt at length with the water-supply question. Babu Debendranath Acharya was elected a delegate.

From Sarabad

A largely attended meeting was held at Sarabad, thana Raipura in the district of Dacca. The people of three or four adjoining villages took an active part. One and all strongly protested against the proposed Jute Bill and change of the primary standard into different local dialects. Nine delegates were elected to attend the coming Provincial Conference at Mymensingh.

From Sarachar

The people of several villages met at Sarachar under the presidency of Babu Saratchandra Rai-Choudhury to elect delegates to the Provincial Conference and to consider the effects of the Jute Bill and the new scheme of rural education. Resolutions were adopted praying to the government to abandon both.

From Shakespeare Society (Calcutta)

The Calcutta Shakespeare Society elects the following delegates to the forthcoming Mymensingh Conference:—

Babus Narendranath Sen, Surendranath Banerjea, Hon'ble Bhupendranath Bose, Babus Hirendranath Dutt, Jnanranjan Banerji, Dr. Saratkumar Mullick, Babus Lalitmohan Ghosal, Sachindranath Mukherjee, Kartickchandra Kumar, Prabodhchandra Roy, Prabodhchandra Bose and Satishchandra Mukherji.

From Sharishabari

A largely attended meeting was held on the 18th April at the Sharishabari School premises under the presidency of Babu Haragopal Bhattacharji to elect delegates to the Conference. Both the gentry and the peasants attended in large numbers. There was one voice in protesting against the various measures of the Government. Five delegates were elected.

From Shasher Dighi

At Shasher Dighi a meeting of the Hindus and Mohamedans of Noapara and Shasher Dighi within Bajitpore took place on Sunday to record its protest against the proposed partition of the Bengali language

and the Jute Bill and expressed sympathy with the Bajitpur Association and the Provisional Conference. One delegate was elected.

From Shirpur (Mymensingh)

In a largely attended public meeting held on the 17th March, over fifty delegates were elected to the Mymensingh Conference. Village meetings have been arranged for and representatives from villages have been proposed. Subscriptions are being collected.

From Shimulkandi

People of different communities of Shimulkandi, Rajnagar, Srinagar, Baluakandi, and Gopalnagar met at the spacious 'maidan' of Shimulkandi Bazar and elected delegates to attend the Provincial Conference at Mymensingh. Babu Anukulchandra Roy presided. The meeting strongly protested against the proposed partition of Bengal, the transition of the Primary standard into the different colloquial languages and the proposed Jute Bill.

From Simulkandi

For the furtherance of the cause of the next Provincial Conference at Mymensingh a largely attended meeting was held on the 4th April at Simulkandi Bazar. All classes of people were represented. The Chair was taken by Babu Anukulchandra Roy, B. A. and the following delegates were voted to attend the Conference at Mymensingh:

Birajanath Barua Roy, Jatindramohan Barua, Sreekanta Chakravarty, Aswinikurnar Ghosh.

A Sub-committee was formed under the guidance of Babu Lalmohan Barua Roy for the speedy realization of promised subscriptions to the amount of Rs. 84.

From Sinthi (Cossipore)

The following gentlemen have been elected delegates to the Mymensingh Conference on the 22nd and 23rd instant from the Cossipore-Sinthe Improvement Society

Babus Surendranath Banerjea, Motilal Ghosh, Narendranath Sen, Pandit Kaliprasanna Kabyavisarad, Rai Yatindranath Choudhuri, Babus Lalitmohan Ghosal and Jogendranath Mukherji M. A. B. L.

Frorh Sunamgunge (Sylhet)

The inhabitants of the district of Mymensingh residing at Sunamgunge, assembled in a meeting, elected Babus Dwarkanath Bose B. L., Nilmadhab Barman Roy and Srimantaranjan Mojumdar, delegates to the Provincial Conference at Mymensingh. Babu Surendranath Bose B. A., presided. The meeting had full sympathy with the object of the Conference.

From Surah

At a meeting of the Rent-payers' and People's Association, Maniktolla Municipality, the following gentlemen have been elected delegates to the Mymensingh Conference:—

Babus Beharilal Chanda, Krishnachandra Ghosh. Surendrakumar Sarbadhikari, Kshetramohan Banerjee, Apurbachandra Biswas, Mahendranath Biswas, Kunjabbehari Banerji, Bejoykrishna Basu and Basantakumar Bose.

From Suri

A public meeting was held on the 18th April in the Suri Bar Library and the following resolutions were passed. The meeting was presided over by Babu Nabinchandra Banerji., senior pleader, Suri.

(1) It is unanimously resolved that this meeting records its full sympathy for the Provincial Conference at Mymensingh.

(2) It is further resolved that Babu Nabinchandra Banerjee, senior pleader, Suri, and Babu Debendranath Chakravarty, editor of 'Birbhum Barta', be elected delegates to represent Birbhum.

From Sultanpore

The people of several villiges met at Sultanpore yesterday to elect delegates to the Provincial Conference and to protest against the Jute Bill and the rural Education Scheme. Two delegates were elected. The Government was thanked for reducing the salt tax.

From Syampur

The people of several villages numbering about 400 men, both Hindus and Mussulmans, met at Syampur on the 6th April under the presidency

of Babu Devendramohan Sarma to express sympathy with the Mymensingh Conference. Arrangements are being made for collecting subscription. Two delegates were elected.

From Tangail

A public meeting under the auspices of People's Association was held on the 11th April, at the Town Hall to protest against the Government Resolution regarding the text-books to be introduced in primary schools and to elect delegates to the Conference at Mymensingh. Fifty delegates were elected.

From Tatarkandi

A largely-attended meeting was held last Sunday at Tatarkandi within Bajitpore protesting against the Jute Bill, the division of the Bengalee language and Bengal. Three delegates were appointed to attend the Provincial Conference at Mymensingh.

From Vikrampur

At a public meeting, held under the presidency of Babu Sailendrachandra Banerjee on the 29th March, 23 delegates were elected to represent Vikrampur at the Provincial Conference in Mymensingh.

5. An extract from a correspondent of *Amrita Bazar Patrika* of 10. 4. 05

The Conference

The works of the Conference are steadily progressing. The secretaries and particularly Babu Nagendranarayan Acharja Chowdhury, B. A., Zemindar of Muktagacha, are working hard day and night. A judicious selection has been made of office bearers and business in different sections have been entrusted to responsible persons. All the leading people of the Province have been specially invited. Every effort is being made to make the Conference this year an unprecedented success. The characteristic feature of this year's Conference is the hearty co-operation of the masses. This alone if not anything else –

should make this year's Conference a memorable event of the times. A grand pandal has been erected, and the climate this year is very moderate. So delegates from other parts of the country need not apprehend any evil effect from fitful climate or extreme heat. The health of the town is now exceptionally good. We expect a very large number of delegates, including the leaders of the country without a single exception unless of course they are deterred by accident. About 300 students have been enrolled as volunteers. They are doing their duties energetically though not without a hitch. Somehow or other rumour has got abroad that the Police have received instructions to collect the names of the volunteers and their guardians. The students of the Zilla School and the sons of Government officers have all got quite alarmed. Some of them are withdrawing themselves from any direct cooperation. But we are glad to note in this connection that our popular Magistrate, Mr. Thompson, has shown great sympathy with the movement and has helped the Committee to a considerable degree by lending the use of tents etc. It is also hoped that no restriction will be put upon those Government officers who wish to attend the sittings of the Conference. It will be a great boon indeed if the Magistrate himself condescends to be present ; for he will then be able to find that the Congress or Conference movements are religiously free from any disloyal character whatsoever and are none the less auxiliary to a healthy administration. Attempts are being made to secure more spacious houses to accommodate Muffasil delegates.

Side by side the Saraswat Samity Exhibition bids fair to be a great success. Babu Rabindranath Tagore, whose presence on the occasion is being eagerly looked forward to, and whose sudden illness cast a gloom over us all, has at last given better hopes and we expect him just in time. Various arrangements have been made to make the Exhibition as attractive as successful. The two large compounds and all buildings and rooms of the local City College been secured for the purpose. The Saffnity has already cast off its local character and has opened out a broader field ; country-made articles of all description are daily pouring in. Great is the enthusiasm and interest of the people and we may assure the exhibitors that not a single article will be returned unsold. The Samity is making best efforts to have a specimen collection of all country-made goods and invites every one to co-operate with them in the matter. The arrival of Babu Jagatkisore and his acceptance of the Vice-Presidentship of the Samity will be, we

hope, welcomed by one and all. Nine gold medals, besides a good number of silver medals, have been promised by private charity, of which some 3 or 4 are valued at Rs 50. Mr. Inglis, the wellknown Commissioner of the Dacca Division, has been greatly sympathising with the work of the Samity. He has sent a money donation unsolicited and has written to the Secretary in very kind and sympathetic terms. We wish every success to the Samity.

6. *The Bengalee's own correspondent on 15. 4. 05*

Grand preparations

Mymensingh is full of life about the Provincial Conference. The people of the town and the Mofussil are highly enthusiastic. Subscriptions are pouring in from all directions. Even people, assembled in 'hats' and bazars, are gladly paying their contributions according to their ability, from one pice upwards. A general and popular interest has thus been created in the movement. The people are earnestly inquiring about the progress of the work in its minutest detail, from the indigent peasant to the affluent zeminder, Hindu and Mohamedan alike. Every one is evincing a keen interest and fulfilling his share of the responsibility. Hundreds of persons,—zeminders, lawyers, merchants and students—are working incessantly. It is reported that not less than seven thousand rupees will be spent. Preparations are going on on a grand scale. A monster and substantial pandal to be decorated elaborately, is being erected. In order to popularise the movement, 'bhats' the itinerary bards, are going round the interior of the District and singing poems in which are set forth the history, the objects, the necessity of Conferences and Congresses. It struck every one as a novel and edifying thing in this organisation for the Executive Committee to distribute thousands of neatly-printed pamphlets, lucidly explaining the programme of the Conference and its distinctive features, and exhorting the people to join in the movement. It has had a telling effect on the popular mind. From the eagerness which people are showing all round, it is evident there will be a large gathering of all classes. It seems the Secretaries are doing their best to secure the attendance of the leading people of Bengal and I hear every leading man of Bengal has been requested by letter

and wire to attend and many are expected to come. Many Sub-committees have been formed to facilitate the work ; and I understand they are trying their best to secure the convenience of the delegates and to make the movement a success. About 400 volunteers have been enrolled. An Exhibition under the Saraswati Samiti is to be held. Exhibits are coming from all parts of Bengal. It promises to be a great success. The District Magistrate has accepted the Chairmanship.

7. Notice

(Published in *The Bengalee* on 15. 4. 05)

Gentlemen desirous of proceeding to Mymensingh to attend the next session of the Bengal Provincial Conference (which opens on the 22nd instant) will kindly communicate at once with

Mr. Prithwischandra Ray
3, Humayoon Place, Calcutta.

8. An Editorial Note of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* on 17. 4. 05

How to make Provincial Conferences useful.

From the telegrams almost daily appearing in the press regarding the arrangements that are being made for the forthcoming Mymensingh Conference, it is quite evident that the leaders of the movement are doing splendid work for which they deserve praise of the country. The long telegraphic message published in another column reminds one of the days of the Jhinkergacha meeting. When that historical demonstration of one lakh of people, composed of Zemindars, middle classes and the ryots was held, kabiwallas (village bards) were employed to prepare political songs and rouse the masses by that means. We are very much pleased to find that the same national method has been adopted in Mymensingh to educate the people regarding the affairs of the country.

We have been saying every now and then that in order to make the Provisional Conference a useful and permanent body, the present methods should be modified to a considerable extent. What is done

now is that a good many of our leading men sit in deliberation once a year, to take stock of the present state of the Province and to arrive at certain conclusions. Possessing no authority, either to remedy a defect or to supply a deficiency, they have to send the results of their deliberations to the rulers of the land for their kind consideration.

If the rulers refuse to pay any attention to these deliberations, they can take no action to compel attention. Knowing this fully well the authorities have adopted the policy of silence. Are the Indians to continue this method or to change it ? The delegates of the Conference, who will assemble at Mymensingh, have to settle this important point. Dogs bark to draw attention ; and when no heed is given to them, they of necessity give up barking—that is what their animal instincts teach them. And this is why a number of our leading men, in utter despair, have ceased to take any interest in political agitation.

We can improve our condition in two ways—one by pure political agitation, and the other by putting our own house into order. The latter is no doubt the healthier of the two ; indeed, we could have given up political agitation altogether if we had any authority in our hands. But as all power has been monopolised by the Government, we find it impossible to get on without some sort of help from the authorities. So what we should do is to rely both on our own individual exertions as well as on outside assistance.

By carrying on political agitation in a sustained and systematic manner, we may in due course succeed in compelling the Government to respect public opinion in this country ; but, hitherto no systematic attempt has been made to put our own house into order. That is a work which is even more important than political agitation, and it ought to be taken up by the Conference for its very existence.

The Midnapore Conference showed the way. Unfortunately Babu Kartickchandra Mitra, the soul of the movement, died and the experiment had no fair trial. The idea was to appoint one or more paid agents whose duty should be to go round the district and impart education to the masses—not merely political but social, industrial, agricultural and sanitary. They must be paid, otherwise no solid work will be done ; and, it is needless to say they must be energetic men entertaining ardent love for their country. Of course the agent should be paid by the district people themselves ; but the Conference Committee must undertake to incur the preliminary expenses, that is to

say, the committee must bear the expenses of the agent at least for the first twelve months.

Let us now see in what way the agent can render himself useful. Let him divide the district into several centres. Let him go to these centres personally and form local Committees, consisting the leaders of the place. Let him preach to them that if they have a duty to themselves they have a duty to the public also. He will find at least some men among these leaders, willing to undertake the work of a preacher in the neighbourhood, and in this way, educate a good many people in his locality. The people of the whole district may in this way be gradually made to acquire knowledge in various matters of which they are now perfectly ignorant.

Just see how a large number of people suffer from their own ignorance, and the apathy of the State. They have no knowledge how to improve agriculture. They have no idea how to maintain the old, and revive or develop the new industries. They are dying from diseases which they bring upon themselves by violating the simple laws of sanitation. They are all anxious to improve their own condition, but they have none in the world to lead them on.

Zemindars and Zemindars, ryots and ryots, and Zemindars and ryots quarrel with one another ; villagers have their internal and interminable feuds ; brothers and friends break one another's heads. Where is the good Samaritan to point them out a better way of dealing with themselves and their neighbours ?

In Christian countries people have at least their pastors to go to, but here they have got none to look after their interests. So, you see, a Conference agent has very necessary and ample work before him.

As regards political agitation, the Conference Committee, through its agent, may bring about public meetings at important centres in the district, at a moment's notice. In this way masses may be trained in political matters and in expressing their views on public questions. If only half a dozen advanced districts follow this plan, then a huge organization may be formed without much cost and trouble, in regard to which it will not be possible for the Government to adopt the present policy of indifference. If the Government does not pay any heed to the deliberations of the Congress and the Conferences, it is because they are not dissiminated as widely among the people by a systematic agency as they ought to be.

It is quite true that the field of our political operation must be

extended to England. But our friends there will be in a better position to do their work if they can draw their strength from the people here. But if there is no stir in India, and our well-wishers go on stumping the ruling country they will naturally be placed at a great disadvantage; and their efforts, however sincere and disinterested, will not produce the desired result.

Let the Conference Committees show by their acts that the country is not asleep—that not only the educated classes but the masses demand reforms ; and that will not only evoke the respect of the authorities for Indian public opinion but very much strengthen the hands of our friends in England.

When a representative of the Mymensingh Conference came to us some weeks ago, we suggested to him two things ; first, to follow in the wake of the organizers of the Jhinkergatcha meeting ; and secondly, to make provision for a paid agent. This was not our suggestion alone, but it had the approval of such of our leaders as Surendranath Banerjea, Mr. A. Choudhury, the Hon'ble Babu Bhupendranath Bose, the Hon'ble Mr. J. Choudhury, Babu Prithwis-chandra Roy and others with whom we had an opportunity of talking over the matter. Let the chief feature of the Mymensingh Conference be the appointment of at least one paid agent. We also trust, the President-elect of the Conference will be pleased to impress upon the delegates in his inaugural address the absolute necessity of carrying on agitation by means of paid agents.

At the Midnapur Conference when Babu Kartickchandra Mittra proposed, and Mr. K. B. Dutt seconded, the resolution relating to the appointment of a paid agent, undertaking to raise at least Rs. 1200 a year for the purpose, it was naturally received with loud cheers, and the permanency of the future Conference was found in the proposal. But, as we said the sad death of Babu Kartickchandra stood in the way of the plan receiving a fair trial. Yet Babu Pearylal Bose B. A., B. L., who worked as agent for six or seven months, did much good work. Mr. K. B. Dutt, in his speech, quoted the following paragraph from an article in the 'Patrika', to show the nature of the duties of the agent

"The Conference agent can commence work as the well-wisher of his own district. Let him form village committees for the purpose of eschewing foreign manufactures ; let him form a league for preaching peace and good will and dissuading people from quarreling and going to law. All these could be done in every district for materials are

plentiful. They are not done, as none has yet worked in that direction. Let the agent introduce new industries ; let him teach the people the laws of sanitation ; let him keep the authorities and newspapers informed of what is going on in the district ; let him proclaim a water or food scarcity when it is apprehended ; let him announce any disaster when one has occurred in any part of the district ; let him expose wrong-doings ; and if he can only do one-hundredth part of the work that is in his power to do, he can not only bring comfort and happiness to tens of thousands but earn an honest living for himself and make his stay worth the pay that he is expected to draw from the district.

The agent, to be able to do real service, should never come into collision with the local officials. On the other hand, he should try to act in concert with the latter, as far as that is possible. The duty of the District Magistrate is to promote the happiness of the people entrusted to his care. That is also the object of the Conference agent. It is therefore quite possible for the two to remain in the best of terms. Indeed, every Magistrate, who is not perverse should welcome and not discourage, such an excellent movement of the Conference.

9. An Editorial Note of *The Indian Mirror* on 18. 4. 1905

The coming Provincial Conference at Mymensingh

From the accounts that we have been receiving everyday from East Bengal, the Provincial Conference to be held at Mymensingh, during the Easter bids fair to be a grand success. A great enthusiasm for the Conference seems to prevail among all classes of the people and subscriptions are pouring in from all directions. "Even people" says a telegram, "assembled in Hauls and Bazaars are gladly paying contributions, according to their ability ranging from one pice upwards. A general and popular interest has thus been created in the movement, the people earnestly enquiring about the progress of the work in its minutest detail. * * * Hundreds of persons-zemindars, lawyers, merchants and students are working incessantly. * * * In order to popularise the movement, Bhats, that is itinerant bards are going round in the interior of the District singing recitative poems in which are set forth the history, objects, and the necessity of Conferences and Congresses." Besides this noble method of popularising the movement, thousands of neatly printed pamphlets,

lucidly explaining the programme of the Conference, its objects and distinctive features, are being widely distributed among the people. All these methods are undoubtedly good and circulated to evoke enthusiasm and to promote a feeling of unity among the people. No national movement is ever likely to meet with success, unless the masses of the people feel an enthusiasm for, and take an active interest in it. We are, therefore, exceedingly glad to hear that the ideas of the Conferences and Congresses are gradually spreading among the people, and that they are learning to appreciate them.

One of the best means of popularising these political movements is to conduct the proceedings in a language which is understood by the masses. In the sitting of the Indian National Congress, the proceedings are usually conducted in English, as English has become the medium of the educated classes of the Indian people for communicating their thoughts to one another, And the use of the language by the speakers on the Congress platform has also become necessary on another ground, that is to say in order to make our rulers directly understand the views which the Congress holds on any particular question. In the cases of the Provincial Conferences, however, the proceedings can be advantageously conducted in the vernacular dialects of the Provinces in which they are held, though the Resolutions which are passed by them, may be worded in English, The use of the vernacular dialects by the speakers will help to educate the masses of the people in the politics of the country, and enable them to understand and take an active part in the matter which concerns their welfare most intimately. A brief summary in English of the speeches delivered by the movers of the Resolutions may be published in the newspapers conducted in the English language, along with the Resolutions themselves worded in English. This will help our rulers and the people of the other provinces to understand the views of the Conferences on the subjects of their discussion. Though in some of the past sittings of the Bengal Provincial Conference, some speakers occasionally spoke in Bengali, yet the practice was only an exception, and not the rule. If the promoters of the Bengal Provincial Conference really want to make it popular, they should think of conducting their proceedings in the Bengali spoken dialect, and not in English.

Another means of popularising these movements is to deal with some subjects in which the people are ultimately interested. For instance, the idea of the Dharmogolas which we noticed in our paper

at some length a few days ago, should be discussed and approved of as a practical measure for affording relief to the people in times of scarcity and distress and the Government and the Mofussil landlords be requested to give the scheme a fair trial. Then again, the question of the deterioration of cattle should be discussed and some practical steps taken to improve their breed. So again, instead of appealing to the Government alone to remove water scarcity in the Mofussil the Conference should also devise some means to have it removed by the people themselves, as far it lay in their power, or by their landlords and natural leaders as they used to do in the good old days, when the excavation or re-excavation of tanks was considered by them as a part of their religious duties. Further, a Resolution may be passed on the necessity and importance of scientific agricultural education and of the establishment of ideal agricultural farms and of our youngmen settling in them as gentlemen farmers. Subjects like this which interest the people, and are easily understood by them, should be brought before the Conference for discussion, and definite Resolutions passed on them. Such steps will not only make the Provincial Conferences popular, but will also help us in solving some of the difficult problems which face us. If we can show to Government that we know how to help ourselves, Government also will be ready and willing to help us. Criticism of the unpopular and pernicious measures of Government is certainly necessary and must be made, but our Conference should not rest satisfied with merely making some criticism and passing some formal Resolutions on a variety of subjects. They should also devise some means for self-help and national advancement, and must work throughout the year to give these means a practical shape. If we do not pursue this course, we shall never be able to stop the mouths of those who decry our Conferences and Congresses as brilliant shows, got up by some interested people who have an eye more on their own advancement than on that of the people. Let us hope that the Conference that is about to be held at Mymensingh will be able to silence such adverse criticism by making a new departure in its proceedings and devising some practical means for bettering the lot of the masses of the Bengali people.

10. News published in *The Bengalee* on 19. 4. 05

Delegates are arriving from all quarters. Miss Sarala Ghoshal reaches to-morrow and presides over the 'Shurid Sammilani'. The President reaches on Friday. Grand preparations are being made for his reception.

Mr Thomson will open the Saraswat Exhibition. Mr. Webster, the District Judge and Mr. J. N. Ghosh, the Additional Judge, act as judges of the Exhibits. The Commissioner, Mr. Inglis distributes prizes on the 6th of May.

11. An Editorial Note of *The Bengalee* on 19. 4. 05

The Mymensingh Conference

The Mymensingh Conference meets on Saturday next. It will meet amid a demonstration of popular enthusiasm, almost unparalleled in the annals of East Bengal. Reactionary bureaucrats serve a most useful purpose in the evolution of nations. They stimulate and call forth into vigorous action popular forces which otherwise would lie dormant. There was for some time a lull in the activities of our national life. But Lord Curzon has dissipated our lethargies and has inspired even the apathetic and the indifferent with a new interest in public affairs. There were thousands who stood outside the pale of our public activities. Roused and alarmed by a policy of reaction and retrogression, they have joined the ranks of public life. This is the part assigned to reactionary rulers in the dispensation of Providence. This is the part which Lord Curzon has played in our history. All things must make for progress. Progress is the law of nature and the dispensation of Divine Providence ; and even reactionaries must contribute to this great end. A high English civilian said to an Indian gentleman in the course of conversation that if the masses of the people took part in public movements, the country would have to be governed on very different principle. What he probably meant to say was that public opinion could not then be flouted or disregarded as it is now unhappily the practice. We desire to tell this officer and all also whom it may concern that the leaders of the educated community are determined to take the masses with them in their onward movement towards political progress. Time and the forces which time forges will help them in this blessed work.

All the activities of modern life move in the direction of popularizing liberal and progressive ideas. The action of Government itself stimulates these forces. The Railways, the Telegraph, the Post Office, the Newspaper Press are so many powerful agencies for disseminating political and progressive ideas ; and they are aided by the earnest efforts of our own countrymen. Wherever the Conference is held, a determined effort is made to educate the masses in the ideas of the Conference. The people of Mymensingh are past masters in the art. They organised an agitation in connection with the partition question which was proof against Viceregal remonstrance and the seductive influence of Viceregal eloquence. It was an agitation which extended to the distant rural villages and roused the masses in their thousands. The same machinery is now employed in educating the masses, in the principles of the Conference and we may await the result with the assured confidence of a similar measure of success. Pamphlets have been issued, in easy Bengali, not in the varying dialects of different parts of Mymensingh, which have been distributed and broadcast. They discuss the leading public questions of the day with a point and an emphasis which leave nothing to be desired. The session of the Conference will still further help to disseminate the political ideas of the educated community among the masses. The blessed work has begun. As the years roll on, the volume of this educational movement will grow and spread ; and if we have a few more Viceroys like Lord Curzon, the interest of political progress will still further be helped by uniting the whole community—the educated men and the masses—in the firm and solemn determination to roll back the tide of reaction and to obtain, with the aid of the constitutional means at our disposal, the fulfilment of the gracious promises contained in the Queen's Proclamation. Out of evil cometh good, and Lord Curzon's administration in India will have furnished an illustration of this truth.

12. News published in *The Telegraph* on 22. 4. 05

The Mymensingh Conference

The Hon'ble Babu Bhupendranath Bose, President-elect of the Mymensingh Conference, and party are expected to reach Mymensingh on Saturday morning. Preparations are being made for their reception.

Mahomedans will accord a special reception. Six hundred delegates have already arrived from the various districts. They were well received, and every care is being taken of them. Many more are expected. The town is full of energy and activity, The pandal has been finely decorated and will accomodat nearly three thousand persons. The play of 'Ananda Math' has been abandoned as some Mahomedan gentlemen objected to the performance.

13. An Editorial Note of *The Telegraph* on 22. 4. 05

The Mymensing Conference comes off on the 22nd instant ; and all Bengal waits with bated breath for a great demonstration of popular enthusiasm and hurts at Government measures. Lord Curzon has certainly done a great service to the people of Bengal by rousing them from their torpor and inoculating them with the fence of excitement. His Excellency is the greatest benefactor of the Bengali race. He has called them liars and thereby compelled them to become more truthful in future ; his measures have made them active beyond all precedent. A nation that slept in the peaceful slumbers of clerkship and pettyfogging and editing, has shaken off its calm and apathy, and called into play every nerve and fibre to defend their rights,—which rights they fancy are in ruthless jeopardy. It is said that a vote of censure will be passed upon the dead Dr. Johnson who said “patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel !” We understand that the word “aggrieved” will be substituted for “scoundrel”. Fit retribution for Dr. Johnson. We are assured that the Conference will consider many important measures and will be “unparalleled in the annals of East Bengal,” as a contemporary says: On the eve of every such Conference or Congress we are told that it will be “unparalleled”. Were, then, all the past gatherings ‘not’ “unparalleled” ? If so, why did the “Bengalee” call them as such ? Every such political gathering being unparalleled, they are all equal, and we beg to quote the Report on the Bengal Administration—“There is a tendency in the native press to supply the deficiency by invention and exaggeration.” But we must say that we do not disapprove fair criticism of Government measures, and we would right gladly encourage criticism if there was less lavish expenditure of the exaggerating words “enthusiasm”, “unparalleled”, “annals of East Bengal” “utmost activity” “great cock-fight”,

“bloodiest speechifying and all that”. They are all convinced that Government will listen to them, but, as we have seen, a single resolution cannot be forwarded ! We would advise our patriots to first devise some sort of wireless telegraphy to forward resolutions to England and dispense with the medium not necessary to do so.

14. News Published in *The Bengalee* on 23. 4. 05

The weather has been very foul during the last three days. There have been accidents causing the loss of many lives on the Padma and the Meghna. The President and the Calcutta delegates, proceeding by the steamer ‘Condo’ were caught by a Norwestern near Narayanganj, but reached here safely. A party of students belonging to the local Library Club, waited on the steamer. The proceedings commenced with exquisite patriotic songs sung by Babu Jogendranath Mukherjee of Purnia. Babu Surendranath Banerjea, on being pressed by the gathering addressed them in a short but stirring speech. Then Pandit Kaliprasad Kavyabisharad was pressed to address the meeting and he spoke in Bengali. There the President-elect on being requested by all present spoke also in Bengali. He was followed by Bipinchandra Pal. After his speech, the gathering, dispersed with enthusiastic cheers. The President and party reached Mymensingh early on Saturday and received a grand ovation. The volunteers in attendance were as earnest as anywhere. Great enthusiasm prevailed. The Conference meets on 22. 4. 05.

Arrival of the President

The President, Babu Surendranath Banerjea and the delegates from Calcutta, Burdwan, Pabna, Sylhet, Barisal and Faridpur arrived here this morning. There was an immense gathering at the station to welcome them. The Mahommedans organised a special demonstration in honour of the President, Babu Surendranath Banerjea and the other delegates were respectively cheered lustily on their alighting from the train: The ‘route’ to the President’s quarters was lined throughout by volunteers, and as the carriage of the President and Babu Surendranath Banerjea drove past, cheers were lustily called and responded to. Mymensingh never experienced such enthusiasm and a feeling of solidarity between Hindus and Mussalmans.

15. An Editorial Note of *The Bengalee* on 23. 4. 05*Bengal Provincial Conference*

The masterly address delivered by the Hon'ble Babu Bhupendranath Bose, as President of the Bengal Provincial Conference which began its session at Mymensingh yesterday, deserves, and will doubtless receive, the serious consideration of our educated countrymen, even though it may fail to make any impression upon the Government. Eloquent and graceful in diction, it is also characterized by a tone of sobriety and moderation. Naturally and appropriately enough, the partition question was put in the forefront of the Presidential address. The Hon'ble President wisely refrained from recapitulating the arguments which had been advanced during the past eighteen months against Lord Curzon's scheme of partition and with which audience was presumably as familiar as himself. But he quoted a few figures to show how wide-spread was the agitation which convulsed East Bengal on the publication of the Government of India's scheme of partitioning this Province. He said

"Nearly 700 protest meetings, of which newspapers took any notice, were held, at some of which 10 to 40 thousand men attending. In villages and hamlets many humble people must have assembled of which we know nothing; but putting them aside for the moment, if we take the average attendance at each of these meetings at 1000, and this is a very moderate estimate, we find that in any event half the population affected and met to protest against the scheme of Partition."

Proceeding to the subject of primary education, the President charged the Government of Bengal with having done very little in the desired direction and he gave chapter and verse in support of the charge. As he pointed out, Bombay spends on primary education Rs. 107 per 1000 of population, Berar Rs. 75, Assam Rs. 33 and we spend only Rs. 11 per 1000 ; and of this Rs. 11, the Provincial revenues contribute 7·8 per cent, local funds 67·3 per cent, the rest being met by fees and other sources of revenue. The President further pointed out that of the total sum of 30 lakhs spent on lower primary education for boys and girls, the Provincial revenues contributed Rs. 143,000, the local boards, Rs. 748,000, the Municipalities Rs. 53,000 and Rs. 16,36,000 were derived from fees, that is to say, more than half the cost of elementary education in Bengal is borne by the agriculturists

and artisans for whose children this education is primarily intended. Nor was this all. As the agriculturists and artisans contribute equally with the landed class to the district funds, perhaps it would be nearer the mark to say that the former contribute no less than three-fourths of the total expenditure on elementary education in this Province. The share of Government contribution has therefore been ludicrously small. Referring to the officialization of the Universities the President gave some interesting figures which speak for themselves. He showed that the list of nominated members shows, apart from the six 'ex-officio' fellows, no fewer than fifty-three Englishmen and Indian officials and quasi officials out of a total number of seventy-one member. Of the eight members, elected by the Faculties of Arts, Science, Medicine and Engineering, as many as seven were officials, pure and simple. Of the ten members of the Syndicate as many as eight were Europeans, the remaining two being Indians who were returned to the syndicate by the Faculty of Law. As the Hon'ble Babu Bhupendranath Basu pointed out, if it had not been for the Faculty of Law, "the whole Syndicate would have remained in the hands of a body composed wholly of Europeans." Comment upon this would be work of superarrogation. The next question dealt with in the Presidential address was that of the abolition of the competitive test for recruitment to the public service, which, as the President was careful to point out, the Province owed to Lord Curzon. We however, refuse to endorse the statement made by the President that Sir Andrew Fraser was quite "helpless" in the matter. There was nothing to prevent His Honour from protesting against the innovation suggested by the Government of India, if he had chosen to do so. But Sir Andrew Fraser contented himself with dittoing the Government of India. Indeed nothing has given a greater shock to the confidence of the people of Bengal in their present ruler than his apparent readiness to allow himself to be made a tool of by his official superior, the Viceroy. Malaria and sanitation were next dealt with and the President took the opportunity of reminding the assembly that though in regard to the larger questions of drainage and the cleaning of river beds we must be dependent upon the action of Government, still it is our duty to strive in our humble way to propagate among our own people the laws of sanitation which modern science has established. Public bodies in the Mafassal may well devote more attention to this simple matter

than they appear to have hitherto done, and it is to be hoped that the stirring appeal made by the President will bear some fruit.

Towards the conclusion of his speech the Hon'ble gentleman referred to the impression which apparently prevails in certain quarters that political agitation in India has been tried and has failed, and that it was time that we left the Government alone and worked out our destiny in splendid isolation. The Hon'ble Babu Bhupendranath Basu is of opinion that 'such a line of conduct is neither desirable nor possible' and his reasons are summed up as follows

"Gentlemen, we cannot let politics alone: the discussion of political questions, our very defeats and disappointments, have called the pointed attention of our people as to how to raise themselves, we are all striving in an humble way to grapple with the facts of life, to toil and labour for the good of our country. God only knows under what discouragement. Activity is being displayed on all sides—social, religious, educational and industrial: to every lover of this country this must be a welcome sign. The educationist, the industrialist, the social and political reformer must all press forward hand in hand. One separated from the others would only weaken our ranks. The discussion of the political situation has created a public opinion that now sways India from one end to the other. An unpopular or reactionary measure sends a pulsation of motion through the languid channels of our national life: common interests, common wants, common fears and common hopes under a common Government are bringing together the different provinces of India. Conferences and Congresses gather together on a common platform men from all parts of the country, from Bengal to Assam, from the foot of the Himalayas to the shores of the Sea, and are silently knitting together in bands of sympathy the web which will gather the Indian races into a nation. The day may be distant, but to us has been permitted the vision of the flash, though yet faint and glimmering in the morning sky."

The President might have pointed out that our social, religious, educational and industrial activities have been due in no small measure to our political activity and that it would be suicidal to abandon the path of political agitation because it has not always led to the desired goal. Have the Irish Nationalists despaired of Home Rule in consequence of their repeated failures? And who can deny that the Home Rule agitation, though it has not yet been crowned with success, has yet produced a wholesome and beneficial effect in a thousand

different directions ? The Irish Land Act of Mr. Wyndham, the presence of so pronounced a Nationalist as Sir Antony Macdonnell at the Irish Office, the surreptitious connection of members of Mr. Balfour's Cabinet with the Devolution scheme associated with the name of Lord Dunraven—all these and many things else besides loudly proclaim that the labour and the wounds have not been altogether fruitless.

16. An Editorial Note of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* on 24. 4. 05

Conference Presidential Speech and Competitive Examination

The address of the Hon'ble Babu Bhupendranath Basu as President of the Mymensingh Conference is no doubt an admirable one, but it is not as quite up to the mark as the speech delivered by him in the local Legislative Council. That was a master-piece, and a better one has perhaps not been heard in the council chamber. Yet, in this Presidential address, we see the hand of an able man in several places. The great defect of the speech is that it barely touches such subjects in which the vast millions in the maffasil are directly and immediately interested and deals mainly with most of the questions already discussed threadbare in the Congress and Legislative Councils. As for instance, the Choukidari Tax, the Water difficulty, the misappropriation of the Road Cess Fund, the prevalence of Police Rule, the emasculation of the people, the disappearance of the lower and higher classes are matters of far greater importance to the masses than such questions as the Universities, the employment of the educated men in public services etc.

These Conferences will not attract the general body of people in the interior, and thus become really useful organisations, so long the promoters do not confine their attention to only provincial questions. Then it was expected, that Babu Bhupendranath was just the person to furnish the much needed practical scheme for the purpose of imparting political and other kinds of education to the masses, so that they might in due course be able to act intelligently with the educated classes. But public expectation in this respect has been disappointed.

The fact is, Babu Bhupendranath was so overwhelmed with his own business and the time at his disposal was so short, that he could not prepare the address exactly after his heart.

We do not quite understand what Babu Bhupendranath means when he says, "But gentlemen our Lieutenant-Governor, after all, is helpless," in the matter of the abolition of the competitive system in the Provincial Service. Does he mean to say that His Honour had no desire to alter the previous system, but was compelled to do so by the Supreme Government? If that be the intention of the the speaker, then he tries to prove indirectly that His Honour is prepared to sacrifice his principle for the sake of his office. Anyhow by seeking to prove the innocence of His Honour, he would lead some people to believe that his intention was to defend the Lieutenant Governor. Babu Bhupendranath should not have made such an attempt, considering that, both in his so called confidential letter and Resolution on the subject, Sir Andrew declared in unequivocal language that he was an ardent opponent of the competitive system. He, however, gave a good hit to Sir Andrew by reminding him that, as he himself was a product of competition, he was the last person to oppose a system to which he owes so much.

In reference to this matter Babu Bhupendranath makes the following suggestion:

"There have been on an average 18 appointments a year: half of these may be easily thrown upon to competition, pure and simple taking care that properly qualified men are allowed to compete. 6 instead of 9 may be reserved for nomination out of candidates who must have appeared in the examination and have attained to a definite standard and the remaining three recruited from the ranks of the inferior grades of the Subordinate executive service."

It seems that Babu Bhupendranath forgot that the scheme of Sir Steuart Bayley, which has been abolished by Sir Andrew Fraser, contains even better provisions than those suggested by him. He would have acted better if, instead of submitting his own views, he had placed those of Sir Steuart before his audience. Sir Steuart laid it down that one-half of the annual appointments were to be thrown open to competition ; one-fourth to be filled by candidates who would have to pass the competitive examination but must obtain one-third marks; and the remaining one-fourth to be disposed of on the principle of nomination.

But, to quote from Sir Steuart's Resolution, "while reserving this discretion, he desires to exercise it on as small a scale as is possible, and to prepare the way for a further adoption of competition by allotting one-half of the available appointments in either (higher and lower) branches of the service, in accordance with the results of the examination." The scheme of Sir Steuart Bayley shortly stands thus: Assuming that eighteen vacancies in the grade of Deputy Magistrates are to be filled every year, fourteen will be given on the results of the examination namely, ten to the first ten candidates on the list in order of merit, four to candidates having adequate claims to appointment by nomination, provided these latter obtained not less than one-third of the mark. And the four remaining vacancies are only to be filled up by pure nomination. That is to say, of the eighteen appointments ten are to be given to passed candidates according to order of merit; four to those who obtain one-third marks and only four to the nominees of the Government. In short, Sir Steuart Bayley was deliberately of opinion that, "in any scheme that is to be final, the principle of competition must occupy a prominent, perhaps the most prominent place."

What, we think, Babu Bhupendranath should have done was to impress upon his hearers that a more experienced Lieutenant-Governor than Sir Andrew had introduced a system which the latter has knocked on the head, without rhyme and reason. As a matter of fact no Lieutenant-Governor gave such anxious thought to the subject of the recruitment of the Sub-ordinate Executive Service as Sir Steuart did in 1889. And his scheme, so liberal and statesman-like, after a successful trial of nearly 15 years, was violently withdrawn by one of his successors who was a perfect stranger to Bengal ! Bhupendranath should have, with his usual eloquence appealed to his countrymen to agitate and agitate till the Bayley system was restored to them.

17. An Editorial Note of *Indian Mirror* on 29.4.1905

The Presidential Address at the Mymensingh Conference

Whatever may be thought of the Hon. Mr. Bhupendranath Bose's Presidential address at the Mymensingh Conference, no one can say that it contains any revolutionary ideas. The address raises no controversial points and deals moderately with a number of important questions which are now exercising the public mind. The style of the

address is vigorous, and here and there may be noticed a few bright sallies of humour arranged with unquestionable advantage. The key note of the address is eminently patriotic, specially in the peroration, the effect of which is heightened by a well chosen quotation from one of Bengal's national poets. So far the address is an excellent one, and the Hon. Mr. Bhupendranath Bose deserves the congratulations of the public. But if any one tries to find in the speech any new thought or any food for serious reflection, he must confess to sore disappointment. In that respect we must admit frankly, it compares unfavourably with some of the past Presidential addresses at the Provincial Conference. However turning to the subjects dealt with in the address, we are glad to find that the place of honour is given to the partition question. The President has not thrown any new light upon the subject, and this was certainly impossible for him to do, in the absence of any authentic information regarding the scheme, but he has done well in exhorting the people to continue their agitation with unabated vigour. A considerable portion of the Presidential address is taken up with the subject of education, both University and Primary, and the past apathy of the local Government in the matter is strongly supported by the figures which have been given. It is pointed out that while Bombay spends on Primary Education Rs 107 per 1,000 of population, Berar Rs 75 and Assam Rs 33, Bengal spends not more than Rs 11, of which the Provincial revenue contribute only 7·8 per cent, the rest being met by local funds fees and other sources of revenue. Mr. Bose very rightly holds up example of Baroda and Mysore, and urges that elementary education should be made compulsory among the masses. The soundness of this proposition is beyond dispute especially having regard to the fact that Japan, who is now held up as the model of Asia, has followed the same process in the elevation of her people.

We should have been glad, however, if the Hon. Mr. Bose had turned his attention to ethical training which is the strongest point in the educational system of Japan. Education divorced from religious or ethics, can never be regarded as a means of national elevation. Unselfishness, self-sacrifice, patriotism and other virtues which distinguish great nations, especially Japan, are the result of ethical training and it is our settled belief that unless and until such training is made the basis of our educational system, what is known as national regeneration will remain only a dream.

As regards higher education, we agree generally with Mr. Bose's

remarks, specially where he points out the duty which the wealthier classes owe to the people. "But while not minimising the responsibility of the Government" says Mr. Bose, "may I be permitted to observe that, in matters of education, especially in the higher branches we the people have not done our duty." Exactly so. We expect Government to do all that is possible to spread the light of education among the people, and, in view of the large surpluses accruing to the public revenues every year, it is but fair to ask our rulers to be liberal towards this branch of administration ; but the people themselves must not shirk their own responsibility in the matter. Popular activity is, after all, the best cure of official stolidity. If our people move on with energy and determination, the Government will be ashamed to remain idle. This has been proved in the case of the movement of scientific and industrial education started in this province, soon after the death-blow struck at higher education by the passing of the present Universities Act. When the people began to collect funds for giving technical training to their youth in foreign countries, the Government realised its own duty in the matter and forthwith started the scheme of technical scholarship.

We next come to the portion of the address which deals with the abolition of the competitive test for admission to the Provincial Executive services, and the employment of Indians in the public services of the Country. Mr. Bose sums up these questions in the following apt sentence: "No Commission or Resolution of the Government of India can alter a Parliamentary statute or undo the gracious promise of the Sovereign or take away a people's rights."

The next subject is Malaria and Sanitation and we must say that we are greatly disappointed to the scant notice given to it. Besides the partition question, this was the only subject of purely Provincial interest selected by the President, and it is to be regretted that after the light thrown upon it by the Hon' ble Mr. J. Chaudhuri in Bengal Legislative Council, it received only a cursory notice from the President of the Conference.

We are equally disappointed at the omission from the Presidential address of such important subjects as industrial and agriculture reform, technical education, etc., which have hitherto found a prominent place in the proceedings of the Provincial Conferences, specially in Southern India. Mr. Bose has disposed of these subjects, in about half a dozen lines, merely expressing his satisfaction at the activity which is being

displayed by the people in these matters. The omission of the subject of agriculture appears the more glaring, in view of the fact that special steps were taken by the promoters of the Conference to collect a large number of cultivators at its sittings. We are afraid, they took poor interest in some of the subjects which the President of the Conference dwelt upon in his address.

Turning away from those disappointing features of the address, we come to the conclusion which seems to us to be the best portion of the whole speech, containing the most admirable sentiments and ideas. Mr. Bose holds a correct standard of public criticism in the same light, much of misunderstanding existing between it and the people will assuredly be removed. As to the effects of political agitation, Mr. Bose observes: "There seems to be an impression in certain quarters that political agitation in India has been tried and failed, that the Government has not moved with the degree of celerity that we wanted; that it has not moved at all, and that not unoften it has gone back. The result of it all is not progress but bitterness not success but disappointment. Leave the Government alone, and let us, work out our destiny in isolation. Such a line of conduct is neither desirable nor possible." This is quite true, and there should be no misunderstanding about it among our countrymen. We must oppose, by all constitutional means that we possess, such Government measures as appear to us to be opposed to the true interests of our country. Let us, however, not forget that we have our own duties to perform, and that it will not do always to cling to the apron strings of our rulers. The people must not rest upon their oars, because they think it is the duty of the Government to push on the boat. In the first place, we must all find out what our national short-comings are and, this done, our aim should be to remove them. Our activities should spread over the whole field of progress, material, social, intellectual and spiritual. It should be clearly remembered that individually and collectively, we are the architects of our destinies, and that Providence himself will refuse to help us, if we do not strive and help ourselves.

Mr. Bose in conclusion says: "Let us bring to her (India's) service greater earnestness, greater devotion, greater sacrifice. Let that be the rule of our life, and the day of our India's generation will not be far off." We too say the same, and we have indicated already how we may develop this lofty sense of patriotism.

18. An Editorial Note of *The Bengalee* on 27. 4. 05

The Mymensingh Conference

It would not be an adequate or faithful description of the Mymensingh Conference to say that it was a great success. It was the greatest Conference ever held. It was indeed something more. The Conference had stirred the heart and soul of the people of the Mymensingh district, and they attended in their hundreds and in their thousands to speak out their grievances and to stay the hand of reaction which would partition their province and break up their language, which would restrict Local Self-Government in the rural areas and impose fetters upon the freedom of contract in the jute trade to which the district and the whole of East Bengal are so much indebted for their prosperity. It is a common enough fashion with our officials to treat Indian public opinion with indisguised contempt, because they say that it is sectional and that it does not reflect the voices of the masses. We only wish some of them had been present at the Mymensingh Conference, when ryot after ryot in their rustic clothes and tradesman after tradesman appeared on the platform to speak to the resolutions that were being discussed. The good sense and moderation tempered with the earnestness with which they spoke showed beyond mistake that the ideas of the educated classes had gone down to the lower strata of society, and that it was no sectional opinion which found utterance at the Mymensingh Conference. Lord Curzon has indeed done us a great service. He has united the Zemindar and the ryot, the Mahomedan and the Hindu in firm and compact opposition to his reactionary policy. The Mymensingh Conference illustrated this truth beyond the possibility of doubt. Mymensingh is the land of prosperous ryots and of prosperous Zemindars. Hitherto our Zemindars, who deeply sympathizing with our Conferences, had discreetly held aloof from them. They have now thrown off this attitude of reserve and have boldly asserted their position as leaders of the people and of all popular movements. One of the most influential Zemindars of the district, the son of a Raja whom the Government had delighted to honour, accepted the office of President of the Reception Committee and delivered an admirable speech expressing his full sympathy with the Conference movement. Babu Jagatkishore Acharjya Chowdhury and other leading Zemindars moved and supported

Resolutions. Associated with them were the cultivators and the tradesmen whom the reactionary policy of the present Government has brought out from the quiet seclusion of their lives. Then there were the leaders of the bar and representatives of the educated community, whose interest in public movements has made them so unpopular with our present rulers. The Mahomedan community was equally conspicuous in their zeal and enthusiasm for the Conference. It is often said that the Congress is a Hindu Movement and that the Mahomedans have no sympathy with it. Never was this myth more completely exploded than at the Mymensingh Conference. The attendance of our Mahomedan fellow-subjects was large and the number of Mahomedan speakers at the Conference was actually in excess of the number of Hindu speakers. The proceedings were marked by the moderation and good sense which characterise the deliberations of our Conferences and our Congresses. The President's speech was a masterpiece, worthy of the best traditions of the great gathering over which he presided with singular tact, judgement and moderation. His abilities mark him out for yet higher honours which await him, and, we trust in the near future. As a speaker observed in proposing him to the chair, his Presidentship of the Conference was but the prelude to the Presidentship of the Congress, the highest honour which it is in the gift of our countrymen to bestow upon one of themselves. The proceedings were conducted in English as well as in Bengali and brought to light the wonderful resources of our language for oratorical purposes and the capacity of the several speaker (including the President) to make effective use of them to instruct, to rouse and to inspire.

19. An Editorial Note of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*
on 28. 4. 05

The Grand Mymensingh Conference

Delegates who had the good fortune of attending the Mymensingh Provincial Conference speak in rapturous terms of admirable way in which the movement had been conducted. Mymensingh has succeeded in making these Conferences a reality, for surely they have hitherto been mere playthings. It was a success from every point of view. The gathering was not only unusually large but consisted of the represen-

tatives of the three classes who form the Bengalee society everywhere—Zemindars, middle classes and ryots. Twenty years ago we saw such a combination of various sections in our community at the historical Jhinkergacha Conference: the spectacle was witnessed once again at the town of Mymensingh last Saturday and Sunday. The Zemindars, as a rule, keep themselves aloof from such movements for fear of offending the authorities. No such nervousness influenced them in Mymensingh: on the other hand, all of them helped the Conference, directly or indirectly, each of his own way. The alleged difference between the Hindus and the Mussalmans was also forgotten; and they vied with one another in furthering the good cause.

One of the most gratifying features of the Conference was the active part which several representative ryots took in its proceedings. A leading Zemindar, who was present at the meetings, tells us that he was struck at the intelligent way in which these mandals spoke to the resolutions on the Jute Bill and some other questions with which they were entrusted. He said that Lord Curzon, if he had heard these ryots, would have been disabused of the impression that there was no public opinion in the country, because the masses could express no views upon any public question. The ryots hitherto had not been allowed opportunities to take a share in political agitation; and hence they were put down for mere dumb nonentities. Now that Mymensingh has given practical evidence of the fact that they can speak, we dare say, the leaders in other districts will also try to remove the false impression from the minds of the authorities that there is no public opinion in this country, by making the masses take part in public movements.

The closing speech of the President, the Hon'ble Babu Bhupendranath Bose, was, we are told, a masterpiece of its kind. He addressed his audience in Bengalee and kept some thousands of men enthralled for more than an hour by his eloquence. The Chairman of the Reception Committee, Kumar Upendrakisore Chowdhury, also delivered an excellent address and created deep impression upon the minds of his audience. Another speaker, who also spoke in Bengalee and whose speech attracted special attention was Surendranath Sen, the Barisal delegate, who has invited the next conference to his own district. The majority spoke in Bengalee, and each, we are assured did his part pretty well. Indeed, the powers of eloquence displayed by some of these speakers were in no way inferior to those of some of our well-known orators who deliver speeches in English. This fact proves

conclusively that the Bengalee language has reached a high stage of development, and the attempt of maiming it by dividing it into several dialects, thereby throwing obstacles in the way of its onward progress, cannot be too highly deprecated.

The promoters of the Conference have no doubt done a simple duty by making the Conference grand success ; yet, let us repeat once again, they have laid the whole Bengal under a deep obligation by showing, at considerable sacrifice to themselves, that not only it is possible for all classes of our people to band together and act in concert with regard to public matters, but how this can be done. The method they followed was a simple one. It was the same method which made the Jhinkergacha Conference such an unprecedented success. In short they sent out capable and patriotic agents to the principal centres of the district, who organized meetings which were attended by hundreds and thousands of people, and took that opportunity of impressing upon their minds the duties they owed to the country. Others explained to the masses the provisions of the various measures which would be taken up for discussion, and in this way made them acquainted with the burning topics of the day. It is highly creditable to the promoters of the Mymensingh Conference that they could bring together such a large number of people in the course of a few weeks; for, be it remembered that they had barely a month before them when they earnestly commenced the work of stumping the district.

We have been requested by a large number of delegates to express their thanks to the members of the Reception Committee for their extraordinary hospitality to them. Everyone of them was made to feel as if he were in his own home. Babu Nagendranarayan Acharyya Chowdhury, Zeminder, the energetic Secretary to the Reception Committee and other gentleman of leading position took upon themselves the task of looking to the comforts of the invited guests. Maharaja Surjakanta placed his house and men at the disposal of the Reception Committee ; Babu Anathbandhu Guha, the fervent patriot, similarly converted his school building into a temporary abode for accommodating the delegates ; other gentlemen rendered help in other ways ; nay, even the good Magistrate of the District, Mr. Thompson allowed the use of a Government house for the location of the delegates. Barisal, where the next Conference takes place, though as patriotic as Mymensingh, is not as rich in local Zemindars as the latter. So, in hospitality, Barisal cannot possibly vie with its sister

district. But it can beat down the other by making its Conference attended by a still larger number of people. And this it can easily do if it begins its operation in earnest six months before the holding of the Conference.

The most notable feature of the Mymensingh Conference is the appointment of one or more paid agents. The reader is already conversant with our views on this point, and we need not repeat them. We trust, our friends in Mymensingh will at once give effect to this resolution by appointing one or more agents, and deputing them to open work in the interior. The present District Magistrate of Mymensingh is reported to be a very popular officer, and the agents ought therefore to be appointed during his time so that they may come in touch with him and enlist his sympathy in their noble work. And if they can convince the District officer that they are friends, and not opponents of the local Officials—that their object is the same as that of the official head of the district, namely, to try to remove the grievances of the masses,—their usefulness will immediately be assured. As the success of the experiment of effecting improvement through paid agency depends to a large extent upon the judgement, tact, and patriotism of the agents, we trust, the Conference Committee will take special care in selecting their men.

The resolutions, discussed at the Conference, bring to prominence the deplorable fact that, the administration of Sir Andrew Fraser has caused the deepest dissatisfaction possible in the Province. There was not a simple measure, introduced by him during the last two years, which was not taken up for condemnation both by the President, and the movers and seconders of resolutions. A resolution, protesting against the secret and arbitrary way in which Sir Andrew was carrying on his administration, was proposed ; but, it was not brought before the Subjects Committee in deference to the opinion of some Zemindars who were not prepared to offend the ruler of the Province. Another proposal condemning the circular subordinating the District Judges to the Divisional Commissioners was not placed before the Conference, because it came too late, though the leaders were unanimous in their opinion about the mischievous character of this measure.

Sir Andrew will, we trust, now be convinced that the Bengalee Press did not spitefully criticise his measures with such virulence. He should also disabuse himself of the impression, to which he gave utterance more than once, that his public measures had the sympathy

of the representatives of the people ; for, if this were a fact, the measures would not have been so strongly condemned, without a single dissentient voice, by the Conference, which was attended by the pick of the nation. Another striking fact must not be overlooked. While every resolution condemned, more or less strongly, the administration of Sir Andrew Fraser, there was none in which His Honour was thanked for having done good service to the people of Bengal.

20. An Editorial Note of *The Indian Nation* on 1. 5. 05

Referring to the subject of increasing expenditure on Hindu marriages, discussed at the Provincial Conference, the 'Indian Mirror' writes: "It were to be wished that in order that the protest might have received practical effect, those present had been asked to pledge themselves to have no part or lot in marriages in which exorbitant dowries are asked for and given. So far it has been all talk, talk, talk. It is time that all these interminable talks were followed by something like deeds. If the fathers of Hindu girls are to be saved from rack and ruin, if their lives are to cease being a burden to them, we should no longer skirmish with this pernicious custom, but must at once come to close quarters with it. Of talk we have had enough and to spare. Let us now act and put our foot down on the evil with a right good will. Then only can the situation be saved, and the course of the Vessel of Hindu Society be turned from the rapids to which it is fast drifting down." We entirely agree. But it is difficult to think of any effective practical steps that can be taken. The signing of pledges would be of little use. The pledges would not be taken by interested persons, or if taken, would be violated. No special reform is possible without strength of character. How many Bengalees would be capable, on the ground, of principle, to have nothing to do with marriages in which their friends or any influential persons were concerned ? The giving of exorbitant dowries ought to be as much condemned as the demanding and taking of them. There are men who are ready to pay any price demanded for a bridegroom. They are like bidders at an auction, and, as the highest bidders, they carry off the prize. If they are favoured by fortune they may not feel the expense, but they create a precedent, they spoil the market-rate and create a miserable situation for men in humbler

circumstances. The essential meanness of the people and their incapacity for managing their own affairs are proved by nothing more clearly than by social practices like this. And we are afraid nothing in the way of reform will be done till Government comes to the rescue. We suggest no penal legislation, but we believe it is possible for Government and individual officers to do a great deal. Let it be known that Government will not appoint, honour, or in any way recognise or encourage men who give or take exorbitant dowries, or young men who allow dowries to be received in their marriage. There are Munsiffs, Deputy Magistrates, Sub-Judges and other public servants, there are Rai Bahadurs and other men who make a trade of selling their sons; there are young men, Government scholars and candidates for appointments, who allow themselves to be sold. It is possible for Government to exercise some control over these classes of persons. This degraded, demoralised people is apparently unable to help itself. The women are worse than men. Sometimes the worthless apology is offered: "I had to give money when my daughter was married; shall I not take it when my son has to be married?" As if the parties concerned were the same! And these heartless, mean, money grabbing wretches dare to compare themselves with the Japanese?

21. An Editorial Note of *The Indian Nation* on 8. 5. 05

Political Agitation

The Hon'ble Babu Bhupendranath Bose concluded his presidential address at Mymensing with the following words:

"Gentlemen, we cannot let politics alone; the discussion of political questions, our very defeats and disappointments, have called the pointed attention of our people as to how to raise themselves; we are all striving in an humble way to grapple with the facts of life to toil and labour for the good of our country, God only knows under what discouragement. Activity is being displayed on all sides,—social, religious, educational and industrial: to every lover of this country this must be a welcome sign. The educationist, the industrialist, the social and political reformer must all press forward hand in hand. One separated from the others would only weaken our ranks. The discussion of the political situation has created a public opinion that now sways India from one end to the other. An unpopular or

reactionary measure sends a pulsation of motion through the languid channels of our national life ; common interests, common wants, common fears and common hopes under a common Government, are bringing together the different provinces of India. Conferences and Congresses gather together on a common platform men from all parts of the country, from Bengal to Assam, from the foot of the Himalayas to the shores of the Sea and are silently knitting together in bands of sympathy the web which will gather the Indian races in a nation. The day may be distant, but to us has been permitted the vision of the flash, though yet faint and glimmering in the morning sky. The wheels of progress move slowly: it is for us to quicken their motion.

"It does not matter whether we are a conglomerate of races or a nation ; words are but marks in the milestone of time. Whatever we are we belong to India. It is a country well worth living for and well worth dying for. As the Bengalee poet sings:

"From her ancient forests rose the smoke of the sacrificial fire ; from her ancient groves ascended the first articulate prayer to the throne of All High, and from her ancient shores proceeded the light which illuminated the East and West. Let us bring to her service greater earnestness, greater devotion, greater sacrifice. Let that be the rule of our life and the day of India's regeneration will not be far off."

That is fine eloquent passage, and its imaginative fire must have warned a good portion of the audience, especially the younger section of it. The sun and the stars, seas and mountains, thunder and lighting, forest and fire, are fit material for a fine rhetorical construction, and the speaker made good use of those elements to build up his peroration. There is just a chance, however, that youthful minds will be so powerfully impressed by the vigour of the diction as to think of no other "service to the country" than efforts to imitate, those brilliant periods. We wish, therefore that the speaker had descended from the general to the particular, from the abstract to the concrete and had suggested particular topics and methods of agitation to be immediately taken in hand. The view that we take of political agitation in India is that we are having not too much of it but too little of it. What passes for agitation is very often not agitation at all. What is it that happens in our Conferences and Congress ? Large numbers of men meet who are all of one mind on the questions to be discussed. Some speak, others listen. As speaker and audience are of one mind, there is no attempt to make converts, there are none requiring to be converted. Every

speech, every sentiment is applauded. Controversy or debate is out of the question, and discussion is often of perfunctory sort if only because the number of subjects to be disposed of is large. This we do not take to be agitation. Real agitation is that which attacks,—by arguments of course,—the men in whose hands is the government of the country. In England the real rulers are the people. It is of great use therefore, addressing them in public meeting and seeking to convert them. Here the rulers are officials, and efforts are wasted when arguments do not reach them except through the faint, formal echo of Resolutions forwarded by the chairman of an assembly. Therefore, we have always insisted that the proceedings in meetings should consist mainly of systematic well-argued essays, or speeches quickly reported which may be expected at once to reach and influence the officials and the public. There is no use wasting our breath to support and encourage each other, and there is positive mischief in abusing the Government or the rulers personally.

Have we agitation of the effective sort ? Very little of it, we are afraid. The separation of judicial and executive functions is an old topic. It has acquired a special importance after the reconstitution of the Police. But where is there anything like a vigorous, voluminous agitation about it ? Is there anything but a feeble, formal, mechanical repetition of an old cry ? Has a single fact or argument been added to the case for separation since Mr. Manomohan Ghosh closed his eyes ? Has it been recently passed on to the attention of the Government in the way it should be ? The answer is No. Let us take a subject of great and immediate importance, the proposed division of Bengal. What has been done about it to influence the India Council and English public opinion ? Speeches were made in the Town Hall, but they were heard only by men who were of one mind with the speakers. Are they likely, through the reports in the Calcutta Press, to influence men across the seas ? Has any new petition been prepared ? By the time that our delegates go to England, the matter may have been finally decided, or, if it remains pending, the decision will be little influenced by the speeches of the delegates at a time when the whole country will be agitated by party questions of home politics. We suggested a compilation consisting of the petitions already prepared, Sir Henry Cotton's speech, and selections from articles in the press and from speeches delivered in the Town Hall. Such a tract circulated among members of the India Council and other influential men, and

personally expounded by well-informed men like Sir Henry Cotton may be of great use. Has such a compilation been made ? The answer again is, No. Wherever there is any quiet, solid work to be done, few of our countrymen are equal to it ; but hundreds are already to talk or listen. By solid work we mean work such as that which has been done by Mr. R. C. Dutt in his books or by the Hon'ble Mr. Gokhale in his financial speeches, or by Manomohan Ghosh in his tracts.

The Hon'ble speaker has an imperfect appreciation of the laws of social evolution if he thinks that the question of national unity and growth is only a question of words, or that peoples differing in language, life and religion, and differing everyday more and more, achieve a nation's destiny if only they have common political grievances changing from year to year. In that case, the opposition in England may be said to constitute at any one time a nation. Nobody however speaks of Liberals and Conservatives as nations. The English Nation is one. We pass on to a more practical topic, the character and impulses of the people. There can be no real agitation without the true spirit of an agitator. No one trusts an agitator who is not prepared to make a sacrifice, who is not a constructive worker to the best of his capacity and resources. If the English are the greatest agitators in the world, they are also the greatest doers. No one has a right to teach the Government its duties who is oblivious of his own duties as a citizen. The Hon'ble speaker drew quite an unnecessary and unreal distinction between politics on the one hand and social, industrial, educational topics on the other. These latter classes of topics are included in the subjects laid before Conferences and the Congress, and they are part of our political programme. Those topics were discussed in the Mymensingh Conference. Well now, in the spheres of life to which those topics relate, have not the people their own duties ? Have we simply to criticise the Government ? What educational endowments have been made by the people of Bengal ? How have they been able to help themselves in the matter of social reform ? What industrial concerns have they started or aided ? What facilities have they provided for the industrial education of the people ? What have they done to improve the sanitation of the lands they inhabit or own ? There is a very poor record to show in answer to these questions. The little that has been done has mostly been due to official pressure or to a spontaneous desire for official favour. Has a people so dead to a sense of its own duties any right to pose as critics of the Government ? Have

those men any right to assume the airs of a Gratton or an O' Connell who beseech the Government for Honours for themselves or appointments for their sons ; who would denounce an official to-day, be at his beck and call to-morrow, and would subscribe for his memorial when he dies or leaves the country? 'Service to the country' is not synonymous with criticism of Government. For one thing it is a sacrifice not only of time and energy but also of money. The lawyer or doctor who can render professional service to a poor man without a fee, the man who demands no price for his son at a marriage, who helps the needy in private life, who lives an honest and independent life is a worthy citizen though he neither writes nor speaks as agitator. His 'service to the country' is real. On the other hand the exacting lawyer or doctor who takes advantage of man's embarrassment to aggrandise himself, who makes a trade of his son's marriage, who practises no charity except as an investment, who is haughty to the weak and obsequious to the strong is a disgrace to the country and an enemy to its best interests though he may assume the role of an agitator and even contribute to a fund for agitation. Agitation should be the crowning ornament of a generous and heroic worker, not the whitewash of the miser or the secret sycophant.

22. An Editorial Note of *The Statesman* on 26. 4. 05.

The Bengal Provincial Conference, which has just been sitting at Mymensingh, occupied itself with the passing of a sufficiently varied set of resolutions. They ranged from subjects as far apart as the Jute Bill and the increase of marriage expenses, and included such more or less topical matters as the Local Government Amendment Bill, the water scarcity, the prevalence of malarial fever, the chaukidari tax, and the proposed partition of Bengal. Provincial Conferences are doubtless of use for the opportunities they give of discussing questions of strictly local important questions which can hardly be brought within the purview of assemblies more or less national in character. But the resolutions of the Mymensingh Conference suffer from the not uncommon fault of vagueness and diffuseness, as well as from an apparant desire to include within their range every subject to which public attention has been called in the local Press or elsewhere during the past few months. This kind of thing is not calculated to increase

the usefulness of Provincial Conferences and similar gatherings. Possibly the resolution deploring the increasing distress of the middle classes in the mofussil was inserted mainly for the purpose of providing a practical answer to those who complain that political reformers in this country have no real interest in social reform ; but whatever the reason it appears rather unnecessary for the Conference to put on record its opinion that the distress referred to is mainly due to the gradual exclusion of Bengalis from Government service, the increase of expenditure on marriages and other cremonials and in daily life generally, and the prevalence of malaria and other diseases. There is something, of course, to be said on each of these heads, but the leaders of the Provfnclal Conference know well enough that the distress of the middle classes, if it be a fact, is due largely to other and more important social causes than those referred to. Incidentally it might be suggested that the tendency in the direction of enlarged marriage expenditure and other forms of extravagance is little likely to be effected by the adoption of a perfunctory motion at such a gathering. On the question of the ravages of malaria, the President, had some sensible things to say. He remarked that good drinking water and drainage, sanitary surroundings and a good diet would be of greater avail than the cheapening of quinine packets ; and that, while the Government on its part had a duty to perform, they must themselves teach the people how to reserve tanks for drinking purposes, how to improve the sanitation of their surroundings, and how to build their homesteads with greater regard to sanitary laws. The guru, it was added, holds an important position in village life, and his importance would be enhanced if he knew a little more of sanitation than the hydrostatics and geology. In general Mr. Bhupendranath Basu's presidential address dealt with subjects which have already been repeatedly discussed, and it is of little use to go over them again. The fact is that very many questions special to Bengal are outstanding at the present time and might with advantage be discussed at all Conferences representative of the educated community.

23. An Editorial Note of *The Hindu Patriot* on 29. 4.1905*The Mymensingh Conference*

The importance of the Bengal Provincial Conference recently held at Mymensingh under the Presidency of the Hon'ble Babu Bhupendranath Bose does not lie in the subjects considered, as these have been discussed threadbare both in the Press and on the Platform. There was therefore hardly anything new or striking in the speeches delivered by the President or the delegates. The importance was in the representative character of the vast gathering voicing trumpet-tongued the thoughts and sentiments of people regarding some of the burning questions of the day, such as the Partition of Bengal, Primary and University Education, Competitive Examination for the public services, wider employment of the Indians in the services, the Jute Bill, etc. The Partition Scheme has been kept hanging over the heads of the people like the sword of Damocles likely to smash them at any moment. The feelings of the people of the entire province have been highly stirred and exercised over the measure since its announcement. Is it prudent or politic to keep in suspense for an indefinite period ? The President therefore very properly remarked that the anxiety and suspense through which all Bengal and especially the Eastern districts have been passing for the last two years is probably unexampled in the history of our national life. The Zeminder and the ryot, the classes and the masses, the East and West of Bengal have all joined in condemning it. Neither the original nor the amended scheme is liked by the people whose earnest prayer to Government is not to divide them but to allow them to remain united. The Chairman calculated that about half the population affected had met at public meetings to protest against the measure. He said that a Governor appointed by His Majesty with an Executive Council would meet the necessity of the case.

BENGAL PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE 1906

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BARISAL

FOREWORD

The Bengal Provincial Conference of 1906 had the distinction of being dispersed by the police. In a way it was a compliment that the Conference was treated by the Government so seriously. On the eve of the Conference at Barisal, *Amrita Bazar Patrika* thus wrote: "Every one knows how provincial Conferences are usually conducted in this country. What is done now is that a good many of our leading men sit in deliberation, once a year, to take stock of the present state of the Province and make speeches and pass resolutions. Possessing no authority either to remedy a defect or to supply a deficiency, the conclusions they arrive at practically means nothing. They have to send results of their deliberations to the rulers of the land for their kind consideration. They can, however, take no action to compel the latter to pay proper attention to their decisions. Knowing this very well the rulers have adopted the policy of silence and contempt."

Within this parameter of significance, the Barisal Conference had importance of some sort.

The Partition of Bengal which was effected some six months ago had ceased to exercise the public mind. The Bengal Provincial Conference was held at Barisal to prove that the delegates did not accept the Partition and selected the East Bengal town as a focal centre of the 'undivided' Bengal.

The Partition of Bengal was effected to achieve, among other things, a disunity among Hindus and Muslims. The Muslims were said to be the 'favourite wife' of Sir B. Fuller, the Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of Eastern Bengal and Assam. The Barisal Conference chose a Muslim, A. Rasul, as its President to counter the divide and rule tactics of the Government. Barisal, the granary of Bengal, was at that time going through famine conditions. The delegates, by assembling at Barisal, sought to express their sympathy with the sorrows of the peasantry.

The Barisal Conference, above all, gave a new sanctity to the song

'Bande Mataram'. The song had a wide public acceptance in 1905 during the Anti-Partition agitation and the Carlyle circulars were put in force to interdict the crying of the slogan. Barisal conference challenged the legality of the circular by rending the sky with the slogan and processionists were severely beaten up for shouting the slogan. Barisal Conference thus became a symbol of active rebellion.

The Conference was dispersed at the behest of the police on the second day of its session. On the first day, the Conference resolved to cease co-operation with the Government. On the second day, the Conference took three resolutions before it broke up. The second resolution recorded protest against the Partition of Bengal. The third resolution related to National Education for Bengalees. The fourth expressed its determination to boycott British goods.

Sir B. Fuller believed that nothing would result from the Anti-Partition agitation beyond one or two angry speeches in Parliament. Perhaps, he was right. But, ironically, the hamhanded treatment of the Barisal Conference gave a fillip to the agitators, who were desperately seeking some outlets.

BENGAL PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE 1906

The first day of the Bengali calendar year 1313 will ever remain a Red Letter Day in the history of Bengal, the day fixed for the first session of the Barisal Provincial Conference. That was the memorable day when the streets of Barisal were turned red with the blood of patriotic sons of Bengal, the day her eminent son Surendranath had been unwarrantedly humiliated by Emerson, Kemp and their men.

It was a day of all days. The day dawned with thousands of patriots rising from bed with one solemn purpose to attend the Conference and offer worship to Mother India. All round was a climate of enormous enthusiasm and unbounded activity. Everyone was out on the streets to lend their services for the reception of the delegates to the Conference and for their food and lodging. In all the thirteen delegates' camps set up, there were educated men and women coming forward in a stream for voluntary service. Bakharganj, the venue of the Conference, was all out to ensure that there was not a trace of inattention in the hospitality extended to the honoured guests. While workers were busy with these routine duties, the leaders were busy discussing political problems with Sri Surendranath Banerjea and others. This was the picture until the session was about to start.

Earlier in the morning there was a full closed-door discussion at the place where Sri Surendranath Banerjea was staying (the residence of his relation-in-law, Sri Biharlal Roy Choudhury), whether it would be proper not to sing 'Bande Mataram' on public thoroughfares in obedience to the illegal order issued on the subject by Mr. Fuller. Sri Aswinikumar Datta, the Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Conference, pointed out that his Committee had done its part by receiving the delegates at the Steamer ghat as pledged to do without

'Bande Mataram' and, as for decisions for the later stages of the Conference it would be for the delegates themselves take the responsibility and issue the necessary directives. After a good deal of debate it was decided that since the prohibitive order in respect of public recital of 'Bande Mataram' was not in conformity with law, there was no point in honouring the same. The arrangement decided upon was that all the delegates would first assemble at the Raja Bahadur's "Haveli" and from there follow the President of the Conference to the Conference pandal in a customary procession singing 'Bande Mataram' through the streets. This solemn decision was immediately carried to every house by the volunteers.

It was ten in the morning. Thousands of spectators had already gathered around the pandal since an hour earlier and were getting impatient to find the gates closed yet. When the gates were opened an hour later the crowd surged forward into the pandal, their patriotic urge writ large on their appearances. Their enthusiasm indeed beggared all description.

The delegates on their part started gathering from a little before 2 p. m. at the place wherefrom the Presidential procession was to start. While on their way to this place, Sri Krishnakumar Mitra, 'Howrah Hitaisi' editor Sri Geespati Roy and fifteen members of the Anti-Circular Society including Sri Rajanikumar Guha, Sri Sachindranath Bose, Sri Phanibhushan Banerjee, and Sri Chittaranjan Guha Thakurta had the first taste of the Rulers' wrath. They were all coming in disciplined rows wearing 'Bande Mataram' badges on their breasts and as they had almost reached their destination, Mr. Kemp stopped them and with his heavy baton struck the Assistant Secretary of the Society, Sri Phanibhushan Bandopadhyay on his cheeks. The first drop of the patriot's blood came out on the street.

Sri Krishnakumar Mitra and others who were in the rear rushed up to Mr. Kemp and challenged him why he had resorted to this beating without a provocation. His reply was that he would not allow the men to proceed in rows, to which Sri Mitra pointed out that it had been so arranged to avoid traffic obstructions which the Police might object to. To the question why one was singled out, his reply was that he was not going to let them proceed since they were not delegates. On Sri Krishnakumar Mitra's insistence that all of them were delegates, Mr. Kemp ultimately allowed them into the place of assemblage.

Sri Suryakanta Bandopadhyay, a lawyer of Dacca, was in charge

of formation of the delegates' procession in rows of three's. As he was busy doing this, the members of the Anti-Circular Society were all the time singing in adoration of the Motherland, Surya Babu was also to see that, out on the streets, the processionists did utter the 'Bande-Mataram' slogan while Sri Krishnakumar Mitra, Sri Jogeschandra Choudhury, Sri Anandachandra Roy, Sri. Anathbandhu Guha and others formed the rear of the procession to see that it did not break up or become disorganised.

At the head of the procession was the President, Mr. Rasul, his wife, an English lady and Sri Gaznavi, all of whom were in a car since Mrs. Rasul may not be able to bear the rigours of a long march. Mr. Kemp was standing on the other side of the vehicle and in fact helped Mrs Rasul into it! Following them came the delegates in orderly batches. Among them were Surendranath Banerjea, Matilal Ghosh, Bhupendranath Bose, Bipinchandra Pal, Aswinikumar Datta, Hirendranath Datta, Choudhury Ismail, Syed Huffssin and a host of other distinguished personalities, and top men all in Bengal in those days on tests of riches or fame, wisdom and knowledge and all.

The leaders of Bengal were all by now out on the streets, proceeding in solemn silence along a part of the thoroughfares. By the time the President's car had reached the point in front of the Loan office and Surendranath and other leaders were closely following it, the members of the Anti-Circular Society were also out on the road, a picture of absolute discipline and calm and determination. That was the signal for the Assistant Police Superintendent Heynes to mount a horse-charge on them. Mr. Kemp obstructed the passage of the disciplined patriots and, proceeded to remove the 'Bande-Mataram' badge from the person of Sri Sachindraprasad Basu. The latter refused to part with the badge and this invited for him a severe blow from Kemp. Subedar Ram Sing took the cue from his boss and shouted: "Beat up these rascals, the order has come." And instantly the whole gang of constables fell upon the patriots with their long sticks to beat with. It was a devilish scene altogether only to be seen to believe the cruel performance. An unarmed people were subjected to incessant beating. The procession was so long absolutely calm and silent, but as the police attack started and drew out patriots' blood, shouts of 'Bande-Mataram' rent the sky. None of the Society members fled for safety but put up with all the torture inflicted, to redeem the pledge taken the previous night to sing 'Bande-Mataram' in the face of every possible

provocation. At last some of the members of the Society were dragged into the adjoining drain, while one of them, Sri Chittaranjan Guha Thakurta was dumped into the near-by pond by the devils and even then they would not spare him further doses of beating. When he was about to become unconscious under this continuous spell of physical torture and was losing his capacity to sing 'Bande-Mataram' any more, a constable in his good sense cried out, "do not beat him any more, he will die." The beating ceased and he was lifted out of the water.

These incidents took place in a few minutes and the news spread through the whole procession. Those who were in the vanguard turned back, those in the rear made a dash forward and the Police horse charged those who were coming out of the central place of assemblage. The place itself was ransacked, chaos ruled all over. Police beat up the Principal of the B. M. College Sri Rajanikanta Guha, Sri Becharam Lahiri of Krishnagar and others. Sri Brojendralal Gangopadhyay of Mymensingh was so severely beaten that his head cracked and he thus fell on the ground. At this Sri Krishnakumar Mitra dashed Subedar Baburam away and dragged Mr. Kemp by hand to show to him what had been inflicted on Gangopadhyay. He told him that his Police had behaved like Goondas and they should be stopped from doing so to avoid the worst that could happen. He singled out one among the villains by catching him by the neck. Kemp replied by placing him under arrest, his name being Srischandra De, but the next moment he joined back his gang. When, Sri Jogeschandra Chaudhuri made the request afresh to Mr. Kemp for putting a brake on the constables, he replied rather angrily that he knew his job. At last a bugle was sounded and the constables came up to stand in formation on the street. Some of them with Kemp himself proceeded towards the north, and reaching the point of the Loan office started abusing the processionists. Kemp returned to the place from where the procession was issuing and it was here that he was involved in conversation with the leaders. Surendranath told Kemp "Why are your men hitting these people ? They have done no wrong ; if you feel they have done so, you are at liberty to put them under arrest. I am prepared to take the full responsibility about this all on myself. If you so choose, you may arrest me also." 'You are under my arrest', replied Kemp, and Surendranath also responded saying "I am at your disposal". At this, Sri Matilal Ghosh, editor of *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, Sri Bhupendranath Basu, Sri Aswinikumar Datta and others shouted "Arrest us also." Sri Priyanath

Guha, editor of 'Swadesh' was standing next to Sri Aswinikumar Datta and placing his hand on the latter's back asked Kemp: "Arrest him, he is the host, he has done all these". To this Kemp replied "my orders are to arrest Mr. Surendranath Banerjea alone". While this conversation was in progress, Mr. Heynes charged his horse on the people on the streets. When Bipinchandra Pal was also so charged, he said "You see he is charging me with his horse." Kemp made a significant gesture to Heynes who thereupon diverted himself to a different direction. Kemp made a move for the Magistrate's place with Surendranath Banerjea in his custody. Also went with the latter Sri Aswinikumar Datta, Sri Biharilal Roy and Sri Kaliprasanna Kavaya Visarad.

Heynes stayed back only to be feasted with sumptuous slogans of 'Bande-Mataram' raised from all quarters and not merely confined to the processionists or the Society members. On his right and on his left, in front of him and at his back were only one slogan 'Bande-Mataram' echoed and re-echoed to make him mad literally. He was running with his horse all over the place and all around. One delegate Sri Kedarnath Das, editor of 'Bhandar', was dashed down by his leg from his horse-back. Sri Satischandra Mukhopadhyay, a volunteer who was carrying the copies of the Presidential address, was pounced upon by Heynes and with the help of another Britisher succeeded in snatching away a few copies from the bundle. By the time the delegates reached the Conference pandal the whole assemblage there burst into a deafening 'Bande-Mataram' with which the volunteers greeted the leaders into the pandal.

An incident of a different type occurred at the Magistrate's place. While Sri Surendranath Banerjea was taken inside, Sri Aswinikumar Datta and others were waiting outside in the vehicle in which they had followed Sri Banerjea. After a while Aswini Babu and Bihari Babu were called in, but as soon as they had entered the house, Mr. Emerson cried out "Get out, Get out, you have no hat." Aswini Babu replied: "But this is my national dress." (He was clothed in dhoti, panjabi and chaddar). Biharilal was in coat and pant with a hat in hand and he showed this saying: "Here is my hat" but obviously Emerson was in no mood of listening to him and continued yelling in a most rude manner, thus humiliating two of Bengal's leading men of the time after having invited them into the house through his own chaprasi. Anyway both of them came out. The third, Sri Kaliprasanna Kavaya Visarad, who was also standing at the entrance had only a chaddar on his bare

shoulders which enraged Emerson still more as he saw him. The same treatment was meted out to him as well and was asked to get out. All the three did come out extremely humiliated.

Nor was this all. Emerson did not feel any qualms of conscience to humiliate Surendranath Banerjea too, the undisputed leader of United Bengal. Mr. Kemp took him to the drawing room of Mr. Emerson's house, but as Surendranath was to take a chair, the Magistrate flared up "Stand up, you are a prisoner." Surendranath's retort was prompt, simple but grave: "I have not come here to be insulted." Needless to say, Surendranath refused to take his seat after this incident.

They started the farce of a trial. Summary statements by Kemp were recorded as prosecution evidence, according to which Surendranath was adjudged guilty under Section 188 of the Criminal Procedure Code and under the Police Act and was fined Rs. 200/-. While the formal proceedings were going on, Emerson told Surendranath "this is disgraceful." The latter retorted: "I protest against such a remark ; a remark of this kind ought not to come from the Court." This infuriated Emerson to such an extent that he almost lost his balance of mind and roared, "Keep quiet, this is contempt of Court. I shall draw up contempt proceedings against you." Surendranath said in reply: "I have done nothing wrong. Do just as you please." Emerson did proceed with the contempt case and summarily ordered him to pay a fine of another Rs. 200/- on this count. Another gentleman seated near Emerson whispered something into his ears, presumably pointing out certain flaws in his summary judgment and taking up this cue from him Emerson told Surendranath: "I give you an opportunity to apologise." Surendranath in a firm voice repeated that he had done nothing wrong and as such he respectfully declined to apologise. Surendranath later paid both the fines with a forwarding letter to the Police Superintendent.

The delegates who were seriously injured went to the Police station to lodge complaints against the guilty Policemen. The officers were not inclined to take there 'ejahar' and upon insistence it was left to a head constable to record statement of victims of Police action among whom were Sri Brojendralal Gangopadhyay, Sri Sachindraprasad Basu. Sri Phanibhnsan Bandopadhyay and Sri Chittaranjan Guha Thakurta. From the Police station they went to Government dispensary where the Assistant Surgeon-in-charge examined each of them and prescribed suitable medicines.

In the meantime all the delegates had collected in the Conference pandal. The proceedings started with the singing of the immortal 'Bande-Mataram' song of Bankimchandra, sung in chorus under the leadership of Sri Debkumar Roy Choudhury. Then the address of the Chairman of the Reception Committee was read out by Sri Nibaranchandra DasGupta, one of the Joint Secretaries of the Reception Committee, since the Chairman, Sri Aswinikumar Datta, who had accompanied Surendranath Banerjea to Emerson's house was not immediately available and it was not considered necessary or prudent to delay the proceedings, more so because the address was already printed and ready for distribution.

Address of the Reception Committee Chairman

Following is the full text of the speech:

Brother Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Reception Committee and the district of Backergunge I offer you a hearty welcome. I am glad we have at last succeeded in welcoming you here. The tribulations that have befallen this district and the acute distress she is suffering, have been, indeed, depressing, but we thought it was all the more reason why we should invite those who are interested in our welfare, which is surely identical with that of the whole of Bengal, to attend this Conference.

In greeting you here, Gentlemen, I miss to-day the inspiring presence of one whose patriotic spirit was eager, very eager, to see this Conference assembled at Barisal before it left this sphere, but God willed it otherwise and we have been deprived of the privilege of the guidance of Babu Pearylal Roy. We have also to mourn the death of Choudhury Asmatoli Khan Saheb and Babu Rohinikumar Roy Chowdhury, Zamindars, whose efficient help would have been a grand accession of the strength to the Reception Committee.

Barisal has nothing at the present day to attract your notice, but the ground on which you meet is a classic ground; it belongs to the Perguna of Chandradwip, the name of which must be familiar to you, associated as it is with the blessed recollections of the golden days of the Rajas of Chandradwip whose chivalrous sentiments and deeds won for them a name honoured and respected throughout this part of the country. But those days are no more and the homely Barisal to-day has to offer you

a homely welcome. If you gauge our brotherly feeling by what we have done to ensure your comfort and convenience, we shall be found wanting, sadly wanting, we regret we have not been able to accord you a reception worthy of you ; but if you measure that feeling by its sincerity and intensity, we are sure, we shall stand the test.

Gentlemen, to-day is a red-letter day in the history of Backergunge. So many eminent persons have assembled here in the name of our Mother-land and their deliberations will be presided over by a distinguished gentleman whose name is held in high regard by men of all classes and creeds. I doubt not this noble example will be followed by all our Mahomedan brethren. It seems a few of them have been captivated by waves of siren song coming from certain quarters. I am still confident they will be disenchanted and brought back to their bank of hope by the exhortations of one whom, I should think, it would be a pride to follow.

Gentlemen, this time, I believe, in spite of the most adverse circumstances we meet under very favourable auspices. Bengal has been divided into two against the almost unanimous protest of her millions ; both the Eastern and the Western portion, particularly the former, have begun tasting the bitter fruits of the Partition ; a policy of distrust and the Gorgonian measures that have emanated from it are shaking the confidence of the people in the powers that be to its very foundation ;—all these are apparently depressing circumstances, but out of evil cometh good and out of these has burst forth a new national life which promises innumerable blessings to the Bengalees. We, who had so long lost sight of our destiny, had surrendered ourselves hoodwinked to the tender mercies of individuals who, in their vanity, fancied that they could, with impunity, play ducks and drakes with a nation's fortunes ; we, who had suffered all our concerns to be, again and again, the sport of the whims and caprices of high-placed personages of an alien race and were sleeping the Lethean sleep of torpid repose which seemed to know no waking have, at last, been roused by the sledgehammer stroke of the Vulcan of the twentieth century who wanted to remodel Bengal, and for the matter of that, the whole of India after his own sweet will. Verily, the breath of the Lord has come from the four winds and breathed upon the slain, the mighty dead, and behold, a throb of the heart, a beat of the pulse, a shake of the hand, the spirit of the Lord is quickening the whole house of Bengal. She shall live, India shall live and in the near future realise her destiny through her

own exertions. Gentlemen, I believe in my heart of hearts that it has pleased the Lord of all nations to beckon us to a high calling.

Whoever has studied the signs of the times will, I trust, agree with me in thinking that an era of greatness and glory is about to dawn on the land of our birth, that the day is not distant when India, under the aegis of the British crown, will occupy a conspicuous position in the Federation of Nations. When India had forgotten her glorious past, had forgotten to be great, was sinking into the slough of self-abasement and inanition, He, Whose Grace had made her the beacon-light of the Ancient World, the Redeemer, brought her into contact with a young, nation which, rejoicing in its own strength, did, by the phenomenal progress it made in all departments of life, justify its claim to be one of the leading nations in the modern world. Who will say that this union, through the labours of large-hearted statesmen, now alas! so rare, has not produced its desired effect? Has not a feeling, a reverence, a deep-seated love for the ancient glory of India come back to us? Has not the study of contemporary history created an emulation in our minds to be recognised as a nation? Have we not made a beginning in trying to shake off the lethargy of ages and stand up for solid practical work? Are we not every day preparing ourselves to cleanse the Augean stable of superstition and ignorance and have we not been breaking through old barriers to stretch the hand of fellowship to different castes and creeds from one end of the peninsula to the other-aye-to grapple them with hoops of steel in the name of Mother India! Mark, gentlemen, the ways of a beneficent Providence. The advent of Raja Ram Mohan Roy whose master-genius sowed the seed of reform in all its branches-intellectual, social, moral, religious and political, who is aptly called the Father of New India; the life-long many-sided labours of the great men of blessed memory who came after him and of those at whose feet we have still the privilege of sitting; the spiritual, moral and social work of the Brahmo Samaj; the deputation of Col. Olcott, the late Madame Blavatsky and Mrs. Annie Besant from the West to rouse in us a feeling to profit again by the wisdom of ancient India; the revival of the Hindu Samaj; the noble endeavours-of the Central Hindu College, the Aligarh Mahomedan College, the Fergusson College and other Institutions founded on sound principles for the education of the Indian Youth; the patriotic proceedings of the Association for the Scientific and Industrial education of Indians; the political education imparted by the Indian

National Congress and the union of the various communities of India under the banner ; the good that is being done by the Industrial and Social Conferences ; the invaluable services of the ever-to-be-remembered Bradlaugh and Caine ; the philanthropic interest of the Nestor of the Congress, Mr. A. O. Hume and the Hon'ble Members of the Indian Parliamentary Committee and last, not least the burning enthusiasm of the Swadeshi movement which is spreading like wild fire all over the country and of the demonstrations of the 16th of October-all these have been ordained for the regeneration of India and it has pleased the Most High to place before her, as an object-lesson, the aspirations and achievements of the land of the Rising Sun. A thrill has gone through the whole frame of Indian Society. New thoughts, new ideals, new aspirations have come into play. Even the masses, at least in a large part of Bengal, have been leavened with new hopes and new impulse. The tide has come, the unjustifiable repressive measures adopted by erratic officials dressed in brief authority will but add to the force of the torrent. There is nothing on Earth, I firmly believe, that can stem the tide that has set in at the beck of Him Who guides the destinies of all nations.

I rejoice that at such a time it has been given to Barisal to convene this grand Assembly of the representatives of United Bengal to take counsel together as to how they should steer the vessel of national redemption, shall I say? -on troubled waters and concentrate their energies on the execution of the plan. You have now, gentlemen, before you the pleasant but arduous task of building up a nation.

May I be permitted to state that, in my humble pinion, National Education, creation and development of Indigenous Industries and the foundation of Arbitration Committees and such other Institutions as would by self-help promote the general welfare of the people, should form the ground-work of the structure.

The first thing that claims your attention is the cause of National Education. I acknowledge with gratitude that we have derived many benefits from the existing system of exotic education ; it has revived in us the thought of rising above the interests of individuals and families to think of national concerns; it has impressed on us that no nation by servile dependence on another can achieve the end of its existence ; it has exposed to us our defects and revealed to us the general principles on which the growth of a nation depends. But until those principles are, by our own efforts, adapted to the modes of our

national being, we can never expect to rise or even to hold our own the little we have in the competition of the world. Our ideal and standard of life are not the same as those of western nations ; the laws and habits that govern the oriental character are different from those that govern the occidental; the constitution of the oriental mind is different from that of the occidental. The system of education that is prevalent at present does not seem to take this into account. Are our boys trained in Indian thoughts, Indian histories and Indian traditions ? It is next to impossible for those who have taken charge of our education to dive down into the depths of our national heart in which lie imbedded, may be, beneath the slime of ages, precious truths that were propounded by the Hindu Rishis and Mahomedan Saints of old. I am not sure that these educationists can mould their plan of education in such a manner as to recover them and utilise them in the practical up-building of the old fabric in a new form. These have to be drawn out and cemented with our acquisitions from the West by our own exertions and this compounded material must be placed at the door of every individual, every family, every society and every community of our Mother-land and they shall all be summoned to join hands together to erect the noble edifice of our new national aspirations. It is thus that the policy of National Education will have its fruition. "Without a national education", says one of the greatest nation-builders, "the Nation has no moral existence, for upon it alone can a national conscience be formed." We hail, therefore, with delight all efforts to establish a broad-based system of national education which would take into account and meet the needs of all classes and creeds in the country. All honour to those who have come forward to support the cause.

The next subject that presses upon us is the adoption of national means for the amelioration of the economic condition of India. India, whose name was synonymous with plenty, the superabundance of whose resources was the envy of the whole world, whose manufactures were once the pride of the East and the support of the West, has not now wherewithal to clothe herself, to feed herself. Everybody knows the harrowing tale of her industrial downfall. Over two hundred crore yards of Manchester piece-goods are annually imported to cover her nakedness. Backergunge, reputed to be the granary of Bengal, has been reduced to such straits that she has not the means of tiding over only one season of scarcity and distress. This state of things must not be suffered to continue any longer. Bengal has to a certain extent

awakened to consciousness of utter helplessness if she fails to stir herself to supply her own wants. The whole province has begun to vibrate with the pulsations of an industrial revival. Only yesterday not more than a little over one-third of the weavers in Bengal had adhered to their ancestral occupation and even they, oppressed with the incubus of Manchester, never displayed any zeal in their work ; all their prospects they saw enveloped in Cimmerian darkness ; today they are rallying back to their trade, brimful of hope that their manufactures would in the near future replace those imported from foreign countries.

Apart from the power-looms that are already at work and may be set working, would not a crore and twelve lacs of weavers we have in British India be sufficient to provide for the necessities of the thirty crores of inhabitants in that area? But why speak of the weaving castes alone? Men of respectable and even high families have sent their sons to be educated in weaving, dyeing and other handicrafts and have begun to set a premium upon industrial means of subsistence. You will be glad to hear that many gentlemen of this town have established hand-looms in their own houses and the ladies of their families delight in helping the work of these looms. The industrial movement is a God-send and, I doubt not, it will lead us on to fortune. The splendid work of the Scientific and Industrial Association is bound to open a new and glorious chapter in the history of India and oh the zest with which our young men have thrown themselves into this movement! Their disinterested labours deserve being recorded in letters of gold. The impetus which has roused hundreds of men to activities they have never dreamt of in their lives and urged them on to vie with one another in producing articles of various sorts for various purposes of life, will, I sincerely believe, gain in intensity as days advance. Fancy, only about half-a-dozen villages of such a backward district as Backergunge sending out in only two months about two thousand rupees worth of such tiny things as nibs. Does not this speak volumes in favour of the Swadeshi movement ? But this is only the beginning and is it not our sacred duty to foster this spirit by all legitimate means in our power? A host of Agents should be employed to educate public opinion in the Swadeshi cult, to carry its banner to the remotest corners of the country, to stir up thousands and thousands to take up the Swadeshi vow, to demolish the citadels of conservatism and apathy which still stand as stupendous obstacles in the way of our industrial advancement, to secure the foundation of a number of Industrial and Technical schools

on a humble scale with a model Technical Institute at their head, to persuade our millionaires to break through their long-cherished, old, worn-out methods of investment of capital and launch on industrial undertakings that would substantially contribute to the material prosperity of the country and, to crown all, to create such a spirit of co-operation among all classes of community as would lead to the establishment of Joint-Stock Companies for starting mills, factories and other business concerns for the development of indigenous industries. It is only by such means that we may expect to bring about our industrial regeneration.

I would next draw your attention to the subject of the formation of Arbitration Committees. I do not know of anything that would more readily foster a spirit of national self-reliance than such Committees. Half a century ago, almost every village had its recognised panchayet or its respected leaders who would settle, at least, all minor disputes between villagers and everybody was bound, by force of public opinion in the village, to bow to their decision. The genius of the old village communities had not disappeared altogether. But those days are gone. The solidarity of the villages is a thing of the past. The spirit of self-reliance that was the very soul of these communities has passed away. None of the villagers now looks up to the members of his village for the redress of any grievance; persons of ill repute stalk about among their fellow villagers without any sense of shame or fear. The old fabric has crumbled to atoms, those superb village unions have been disorganised and the worry, the harassment, the unconscionably heavy expenditure, very often the utter ruin of litigants in the Law-Courts and that malevolent spirit of Zid which arises out of protracted litigation and consumes most of our villages by its malignant fire—all these have followed the extinction of that system. Is it not necessary for the remedy of these evils yea, for the very safety of our national existence that we should revive it on a wider basis suited to the altered circumstances of the time? Such a revival would make us self-reliant and promote a spirit of brotherhood and mutual sympathy without which it would be impossible to weld the disintegrated units into a nation. The most prominent factor in such a scheme would be the formation of arbitration committees. It would not only help us to form ourselves into a nation, but the local knowledge of the arbitrators and their intimate acquaintance with the habits and customs of the people with the blaze of public opinion of the village about them, would also

be a great help to come to a right decision about a case. Let us, therefore, form arbitration committees in every district and let those committees be backed by associations which by the force of social sanctions would bring recalcitrant parties to submit their cases to arbitrators and abide by their awards. You will be glad to learn, Gentlemen, that Backergunge has begun work in this direction and the services of the arbitration committees in several villages are being appreciated by the villagers.

Now I come to a subject than which nothing occupies a more prominent position in our minds at present-the question of the partition of Bengal. I think I echo the feeling of everybody present in this assembly and of the whole people of Bengal when I say that the heart of the Bengalee is sore with it and that its very name is irritating. The Right Honourable the Secretary of State for India says there has been a subsidence of the feeling. This is adding insult to injury. God alone knows what we feel. I ask Mr. John Morley-could he ever dream of any such feeling subsiding anywhere in the civilized world until the cause was removed ? Could he ever think of such a subsidence of feeling in England under similar circumstances, in Scotland, in Ireland anywhere ? An autocrat inflated with a supercilious consciousness of his own position and powers thought it fit to trample upon the tenderest feelings of a whole nation, give a rude shock to their social, moral, educational, commercial and civic interests, unblushingly brand their righteous, manly, overwhelming protest as 'machine-made opinion' engineered by political wire-pullers and then relegate it to the limbo of vanity ; would this be borne with patience in any quarter of the globe ? Any other nation would have heaped confusion and brought the whole system of administration to a dead-lock. Unlimited is the patience of the meek Bengali. Nevertheless, he feels, he has the instincts of a man. The injury, the loss, the humiliation inflicted upon him by the dismemberment of his province he will never forget, he cannot forget ; the wound will rankle in his breast until the parts sundered will again be united into one. Did not the sons and daughters of Bengal on that dark day of partition-the 16th of October, 1905-when the sword of Lord Curzon mercilessly smote their beloved Mother, take a solemn vow, in the name of God, that they would do everything in their power to counteract the evil effects of the dismemberment of their province and to maintain the integrity of their race ? Have they forgotten the vow so soon-before even six months have passed away ? Is it possible for them to forget it ? No.

Sanctified by time and strengthened by the self-reliant efforts of the nation, this vow, as years roll on, will be more and more confirmed in their minds and every succeeding generation will surpass its predecessor in the glory of working it out until the wished-for day is come.

The sense of unrest and dissatisfaction that has been caused by the Partition—does it really show any sign of abatement ? Has it not been aggravated and aggravated a hundredfold by the ‘hammering’ policy of Sir Bampfylde Fuller ? Is it natural that the repressive measures that have been adopted by him would lull the persecuted to sleep ? Can you expect that you would mitigate the pain of the heart of a man in mourning by administering the cat-o’-nine-tails on him because he mourns ? Such has been the policy of Sir Bampfylde. He seems to have forgotten the first principle of statesmanship enunciated by one of the greatest statesmen of his country—“Nations are not primarily ruled by laws ; less by violence. Nations are governed by the same methods and on the same principles by which an individual without authority is often able to govern those who are his equals or superiors, by a knowledge of their temper and a judicious management of it.” When Bengal is in the throes of an intolerable grief this chivalrous knight of the most Exalted Order of the Star of India inflicts on her, as a palliative, the atrocious blows of a detachment of Gurkhas, the annoyance of Punitive Police forces, the degradation of special constableness, the sting of circulars which prohibit the utterance in public places of the holy cry ‘Bande Mataram,’ the holding at such places of meetings political, even quasi-political, whatever that may mean, the attendance of students at such meetings, *et hoc genus omne*. Can such proceedings ensure a subsidence of feeling in any person who has even one drop of blood in his veins ? What has been the effect of these measures ? A growing conviction in the popular mind that these have been the outcome of the dismemberment of Bengal. Would such a conviction allay the feeling or intensify it ? Add to this a sense that we are crying in the wilderness ; that there is nobody in the world to listen to our tale of sorrow ; that the British public is utterly apathetic to all questions affecting the welfare of their Indian fellow-subjects ; that, notwithstanding the earnest efforts of the Indian Parliamentary Committee for years and years and a quick succession of deputations from all parts of India, Mr. Herbert Roberts, Sir Henry Cotton and other friends could not succeed in creating even the shadow of an interest in most of the few members of the House who cared to hear their

speeches. Would such a sense soothe the feeling of irritation or exasperate it? Who can tolerate the unalloyed contempt for India exhibited by one of the redoubtable members who, when the word "Behar" in Sir Henry Cotton's speech, suddenly struck his reluctant ear, lost all patience and burst out crying to a fellow member—"What the deuce does he mean by Behar? "Heaven knows what he is talking about. Let's go to the smoking-room and have a drink." Bengal is not dead ; she cannot and will not put up with such indifference and contempt, nor will she be deluded by flattering promises and smooth excuses. She will prosecute the agitation and the movement for the eschewance of British goods by all the lawful and righteous means she can command and will never desist until the partition is withdrawn. The sleep she was sleeping is gone; she is on the eve of a national revival, she will never be daunted by persecutions, even though they overtake boys of tender years ; no, they will only serve to draw out the mettle that is in her ; she has adopted the motto of that intrepid washerwoman of Emerson's- "The more trouble, the more lion; that's my principle" and victory in this constitutional struggle is sure to be hers.

Gentlemen, in conclusion, I offer you again a cordial welcome and may I express a hope that your deliberations will result in sending out hundreds of agents all over Bengal and forming hundreds of permanent organisations in all our districts for the political, industrial, social and moral education and advancement of the country ?

After the address of the Chairman of the Reception Committee had been read out, Sri Bhupendranath Basu formally proposed the name of the President and in doing so delivered an impassioned speech in which he narrated the cruelties perpetrated earlier in the day on the peaceful processionists. He said that so long even a subject people had some semblance of hope and regard for the alien ruler's laws and their sense of justice, but these incidents would only convince everybody that the British Raj was nearing its end. His speech was constantly interrupted by full-mouthed slogans of 'Bande-Mataram'.

When the speech was over and the thunderous applause ceased, Sri Matilal Ghosh, the Editor of the Amrita Bazar Patrika, seconded the proposal.

Md. Abdul Rasul occupied the presidential chair amid tumultuous utterance of 'Bande-Mataram' from the whole assemblage.

The President Mr. A. Rasul, unwell as he was, could not read his address which was read by Mr Gaznavi of Tangail.

Address of the President

Following is the full text of the speech

Fellow Delegates,

I thank you most heartily for the great, the very great honour which you have conferred upon me by electing me to preside over your deliberations this year. I appreciate the honour all the more as I am the first Bengali Mahomedan in whom such great confidence has been placed and upon whom such high distinction has been conferred by the people of United Bengal. No honour can be greater, no distinction higher than that which comes spontaneously from the heart of a great people. I feel the proudest moment of my life has come, when I find myself seated here as the President of our National Assembly.

Since this great Assembly met last year at Mymensingh one year has passed. But what a year—, annus mirabilis—it has been for us the people of Bengal! It has been a year in which we have seen how an alien bureaucracy has lorded it over patriotism, how it has trampled upon the cherished rights and privileges of the people. It has been a year in which we have seen how deeply sensitive a nation may become of the calamities that may be brought upon it by foreign domination and also what a nation can do when it is united.

But before and after the last Conference the whole nation in a trembling voice was asking the question—‘Are we really going to be divided’? We know in what a rude and spiteful manner that question has been answered by Lord Curzon. We knew he was determined to divide us but we never dreamt of the manner in which he was to do it. The quarrel over the Indian Army question had been going on for some time. Lord Curzon in his usual supercilious manner looked upon Mr. Brodrick as one of the members of the Ministry of Incompetents and considered the fight between Mr. Brodrick and himself as that between a pigmy and a giant and that the former would be bound to give in. He thought he had simply to threaten resignation, then all the Incompetents at home would go down on their knees before him, the only clever and intelligent member and the only hope of the Conservative Party, and beg of him not to leave the helm of the Indian

Empire, which without him would go wrong and that they would in short submit to anything he dictated to them. But Lord Curzon was after all not infallible. He was sadly mistaken. He found that in his estimate of self he was wrong. His resignation was accepted with pleasure. To his consternation and mortification the Incompetents did not go down on their knees, but on the contrary were defiant and had already got his successor ready. After such a great humiliation the general opinion, both Indian and European, was that Lord Curzon would not think of carrying his Partition Scheme into effect, and his successor would be more considerate and not likely to override the wishes of the people. His resignation under the peculiar circumstances of the case was tantamount to a dismissal. Oh what a fall! He was vanquished but "his doom reserved him to more wrath. What though the Viceroyalty was lost! All was not lost! The unconquerable will be the study of revenge, immortal hate for the Bengalis was not lost." Knowing what a halfhearted support Mr. Brodrick had given to his Partition Scheme Lord Curzon was afraid that his successor might never carry it through, so he must do it himself, before leaving India. "Stirred up with envy and revenge" he was racking his brain as to how soon he could bring about the ruin of the Bengali people. It did not take him long. The date of Partition was soon announced, he went through the farce of passing a Bill through the Supreme Council of Simla in the absence of the Indian members and Partition was proclaimed on the 16th October 1905, in spite of and in the teeth of the opposition of the whole nation. He knew that unless he did this in great haste, his long cherished object of breaking up the unity of Bengal would be lost for ever. Think of the audacity of the man, who did not hesitate to defy the authority of the Parliament to whom the Secretary of State had given a solemn pledge that nothing would be done till all the papers regarding the Partition Scheme were laid on the table of the House. The country was ringing with shouts of protest from one end to the other, when on being asked by Secretary of State to postpone the Partition till Parliament had an opportunity of considering the matter, he informed the Secretary that the so-called agitation was subsiding. If a man in the position of a Viceroy representing the King Emperor could be guilty of such misrepresentation of the true state of things, he was capable of doing anything. This is another instance of how some Englishmen in spite of their education, birth and position in life, after crossing the English Channel, lose their sense of justice

and propriety and conscience in their dealings with other races whom they consider inferior to them.

What made Lord Curzon to bitter against the people of Bengal ?

Being pedantic and a great admirer of his own abilities, he thought he was perfect, and like a constitutional monarch never did wrong. Coming out as the Viceroy of India he expected admiration from all quarters as a great man of letters and a great statesman but adverse criticism he never expected. He knew very little about Indian character. He knew nothing about Bengal and its people beyond what he had read about them in Macaulay's essays or in scurrilous reports of the special correspondents of some rabid journals. But he soon discovered that in education and intelligence at any rate the despised Bengalis were quite equal, if not superior, to the people of his own race. That a subject race should be in any way equal to the ruling race upset his equilibrium. It was in Bengal that his unpopular measures were most severely criticised. It was here he discovered that the Press was most powerful and that Calcutta was politically nearly as strong as London. He knew what Bengal said to-day, the rest of India would say to-morrow. Lord Curzon got alarmed at the rapidity with which the people of Bengal were progressing politically. It dawned upon him that unless the Bengalis were curbed, unless their alarmingly increasing political power was crushed, unless the growing unity between the Hindus and Mahomedans was nipped in the bud, the British bureaucratic rule in India would be at an end. So he was determined, come what may, to cleave Bengal in twain. Well after all, let us congratulate ourselves that Lord Curzon considered that in Bengal he found a foeman worthy of his steel.

It was not for administrative purposes, nor was it for the purpose of relieving the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, that Bengal has been divided into two Provinces, but it was simply to wreak Lord Curzon's vengeance on the too harmless and law-abiding people of Bengal that they have been separated from their kith and kin and placed under two different Governments whose chief object will be to aim death blows at the solidarity and homogeneity of the entire Bengali Nation by introducing different laws through their different legislatures. This is not our opinion alone but it is shared by many fair-minded Anglo-Indians both official and non-official. It was at all necessary for administrative purposes, which we by no means admit, there were several alternative schemes which would have at once relieved the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal and left the Bengali speaking people intact.

The Nation has unanimously asked to be governed by a Governor and Council. The advantages of such a Government is that we should get an experienced and impartial statesman to be our Governor who is not blinded by the prejudices and idiosyncracies common to almost all the members of the Civil Service. How thankful the whole nation is to His Excellency Lord Minto for the recent high appointments to natives of India showing that he has not been guided by any considerations of race. But if the Bengali-speaking people were to remain undisturbed under any Redistribution Scheme, then Lord Curzon's object of destroying the political ascendancy of Bengal would have been frustrated. The Civil Service acquiesced in it because the creation of a new Province always brings into prominence several of its members who would otherwise remain in obscurity. One of the reasons given for Partition was that the Lieutenant-Governor could not find time to visit all the districts under his administration. It is well known what the visit of the Lieutenant-Governor means. Can any one honestly say that instead of doing harm it does any good to the people or bring efficiency to the administration ? When the Lieutenant-Governor's visit is announced, a Reception Committee is formed, subscriptions are practically extorted from the landowners and other wealthy citizens who unfortunately cannot refuse to pay for fear of having their names put down on the disloyal list. If they have not the money, they must borrow it on mortgaging their property.

Large sums must be raised befitting the occasion for fire works, bombs, and triumphal arches. The bombs announce the arrival of the Lieutenant-Governor who holds a Durbar, shakes hands with some of the local magnates, smiles on others, visits the court premises, the jail and the local schools or Madrassas and then leaves the place. The Lieutenant-Governor with his suite travels by special trains or in his luxuriously fitted boat. Such visits are pleasure trips to him at the expense of the country, but what benefit the people derive from them, I for myself cannot comprehend. To me the whole thing is a farce, waste of public money and time and harassment of local Zemindars, some of whom are already contemplating selling their property and leaving the districts for amongst other reasons to avoid these so-called voluntary contributions.

If such visits are going to be frequent as a result of the Partition then they will develop into veritable visitations. This is one of the innumerable boons which the Partition is going to confer on the people.

Gentlemen, now that the Government disregarding the sentiment, the prayer and the universal protests of the people have so cruelly dismembered our beloved Motherland, what is our duty to her now ?

Our duty is never to recognize this Partition as final and always to consider ourselves united as we were before the memorable 16th October 1905, and we have already shown it by coming to this Conference at Barisal from all parts of Bengal as we used to do before the Partition. This Conference will discuss as heretofore all questions affecting the interests and welfare of united Bengal and if the Government were to divide Bengal into twenty different parts, the result I hope would be just the same. We are determined to remain one indivisible nation and nothing on earth can separate us.

On the 16th October last we took a solemn vow in solemn form never to acknowledge this Partition of our Province but ever to remain one and united.

If we are true sons of mother Bengal, if we are not to be traitors, if we are not to sell our birth rights for official favour we shall fearlessly adhere to our vow like men and if our efforts fail we shall bequeath it as a legacy to our children.

Undone the partition is sure to be. It is only a question of time. Our case is so strong and so unanswerable that nothing is wanted to ensure its complete success but resolution, perseverance and disinterested action on the part of all Bengalis, whether Hindu, Mahomedan or Christian.

We must continue our agitation with renewed vigour and redoubled energy always remembering that we have nobody to support us and that we must rely entirely on our own efforts. Some non-official Anglo-Indians here did promise to help us in this matter but for fear of incurring the wrath of the stronger party, viz. the Government, they deserted the weaker one, viz., the people.

We undoubtedly did expect a great deal of support from the Liberal Party in England specially from Mr. Morley-‘Honest John’, as he is called, but we have been bitterly disappointed. When we could not get any relief from one of the most honest and the large-hearted men like Mr Morley, it is futile to expect anything from any living English statesman.

It is a great mistake on our part to put any reliance on either of the two English parties. As far as India is concerned, it makes very little difference whether the Liberals or Tories are in power, because they

are equally ignorant about India and equally indifferent as to Indian affairs. India must be kept outside party politics and being an Asiatic country must be ruled with a rod of iron. This is the cant in vogue in England now-a-days and this is the principle on which both parties act. They like to brag about India as the brightest jewel in the British Crown but turn a deaf ear to the grievances of the millions in the country the possession of which has given the title of Emperor to the king of the British Isles. All honour to those few kind-hearted men in the Liberal Party who do take a great deal of interest in India and are trying their best to help us in every possible way, but unfortunately for us they simply cry in the wilderness. The bulk of the Liberals are just as different as the Tories. Liberalism of the days of Cobden and Bright is gone for ever, spurious imperialism has taken its place and dominates England now.

The English people are now divided into Liberal Imperialists and Tory Imperialists. The former think now-a-days more on the expansion of the Empire and trade than of those lofty principles for which English liberalism was once famous all over the world. The English conscience is more elastic and pliable now than heretofore but for which no war in South Africa or the inhuman treatement to the Indians there would have been possible.

The Liberal Party like the Conservative Party mainly consist of the middle class people in England. India is a happy hunting ground for their sons. Young men for all the higher public services in India both Military and Civil are recruited from this class every year.

It is self interest which prevents them from making any concessions to India lest they in any way contribute to the diminution of the bureaucratic power in India, the fall of which means the loss of provision for their sons. Therefore they will not interfere with the Government of India even when it is necessary to do so for the sake of justice.

Owing to this attitude on the part of the Liberal Party in the past, a large portion of our countrymen are reluctant to look to it or to the Government of India for sympathy or support and insist upon self-help and self-reliance. I do not think, there can be two opinions as to the fact that if we want to rise as a nation we must principally depend upon ourselves and on our own efforts, but at the same time we ought to be practical politicians and not political dreamers and philosophers. We know that there are some very good honest and justice-loving

Englishmen in the Liberal Party who are always ready and willing to help us in our aspiration. Now to my mind it will not be inconsistent with our idea of self-help and self-reliance to take advantage of their help or even to petition the Government here when we have a sympathetic Viceroy at its head if we honestly believe that by doing so we shall further the interests of our country. But I do consider it derogatory to our national pride and honour to petition the Government for help on any and every occasion as we have sometimes done in the past. We have learnt in our younger days that:

“Help from without is often enfeebling in its effects, but help from within invariably invigorates. Whatever is done for men or classes to a certain extent takes away the stimulus and necessity of doing for themselves.”

We must study self-help, self-sacrifice, self-reliance and devotion to our Motherland. When we have accomplished that we shall be in a position to do all. Remember the word “Bushido” which has made Japan what she is now. Defeat of the Japanese at Kagasima which was bombarded and destroyed by the English in 1863 was the cause of the great Naval victory which Admiral Togo won for Japan last year in the great battle of the sea of Japan. The disaster at Kagasima was really a blessing in disguise for the Japanese. It opened their eyes to the fact they as a nation had great responsibilities and that if they were to exist as a nation they must give up their internecine quarrels and sink all private differences and unite for the sole purpose of improving the condition of their country and successfully resisting any foreign aggression.

Since 1863 they have turned their attention to the scientific and industrial progress of their country. They have sent their young men to Europe and America to learn what these countries could teach them in different branches of science and art. They were determined to raise a strong army and a powerful navy and they have done so and it is well-known now how in their struggle with Russia their military and naval forces acquitted themselves. A Japanese gentleman said to a European gentleman during the Russo-Japanese war that before that gigantic struggle Japan despite her progress in art and civilization was looked upon by Europe and America as a barbarous Asiatic power but now that she has been able to kill thousands of Europeans in the war, she is unanimously recognized as one of the great civilized powers.

Lord Curzon's malignant attempt at the destruction of the unity of Bengal in 1905 though a great calamity, ought to be looked upon by us as a great blessing in disguise.

What, we could not have accomplished in 50 or 100 years, that great disaster, the Partition of Bengal has done for us in 6 months.

Its first fruits have been the great national movement known as the Swadeshi Movement. It is the Partition which has brought it about. It is no longer confined to Bengal but has spread far and wide over India. The idea of Swadeshi Movement, though a bugbear to our rulers is nothing but one's sincere devotion to one's country, one's desire to serve her in every possible way. There are various ways in which an independent people can serve their country, as for instance, Japan has done, but the sphere within which a people under foreign domination can move is very limited.

We cannot enter the military service nor have we any voice in the shaping of the military policy of the country. Whether the forces that we have are sufficient for the defence, or are in excess of the needs of the country, we the people of the country cannot decide. We pay taxes but we have no control or power over the expenditure for the public needs of the country.

In these matters whether the country is to progress or to retrograde depends upon the sweet will of our rulers. But as regards the economic condition of the country at any rate whether the country is to progress or to retrograde depends upon ourselves. What articles we should use and what articles we should discard, it is for us to decide. In this matter, we Indians can serve our country by resuscitating those industries which are already dead, reviving those that are dying, improving those that we already have, establishing new ones using the products of our own country and eschewing the foreign ones. We have resolved to do so. This resolution has given rise to what is known by the name of the Swadeshi Movement. The Movement is simplicity itself. Its primary object is to promote the industrial development of the country. Time was when ours was a great cotton manufacturing country, when our muslins were the pride of European princesses, when instead of importing, as we do now to our shame, we used to export most extensively our cotton manufactures and supply the needs of the various countries. All these we have lost through our wilful neglect. Our so-called education has made us hanker after everything foreign and discard almost everything made in our own country till we have

carried this mania to such an extent that we have driven our manufactures entirely out of the market and facilitated the import of foreign articles which in the case of cotton manufactures have increased by leaps and bounds. In fact we have ourselves killed our own industries.

Now the people have found out their folly and want to repent and by way of doing penance young and old, rich and poor, prince and peasant have taken vows to buy and use Swadeshi things—things made in their own country, with the sole object of advancing the industrial development of their country. This attitude of our people has naturally had an appreciable effect upon the pockets of the countrymen of our bureaucrats. But why it should be confounded with disaffection is beyond our comprehension. It is a wonder to us that the Government, despite its pretensions as to its being in favour of the scientific and industrial advancement of the country, should look upon this Swadeshi Movement as seditious. From the measures which the Government of the new Province has adopted for its repression, the natural inference is that our rulers want to protect the interests of their countrymen at the expense of those of ours.

The success of the Swadeshi Movement in Bengal has been to a great extent due to the efforts and work of our undergraduates, graduates and other youngmen who being animated by the enthusiasm created by this movement sometimes go about singing patriotic songs such as 'Bande Mataram' which has given great offence to our rulers. As far as I know, singing patriotic songs has never been considered an offence in any country before, but in our country the word of our rulers is required to be considered law and must be obeyed.

In order to deprive the Swadeshi Movement of the great support given to it by these young men, officers of the Government at once issued circulars prohibiting under penalty all students from joining political meetings. I do not know whether Sir Bamfylde Fuller is a University man or not, but I have some experience of University life and I have never heard that it was a crime for undergraduates and graduates to attend political meetings, but we must not forget this is a new regime altogether. We may have a new calander before long. These circulars have been declared by one of the greatest English lawyers to be absolutely illegal, but they have not yet been withdrawn and under their authority young and inexperienced Inspectors of Schools forgetting the traditions of their Universities, have been

playing pranks with the students and their teachers. These foolish and arbitrary methods only incited the people to carry on the Swadeshi propaganda with greater zeal and energy. The panic at Manchester and the Government's determination to suppress the Movement at any cost being simultaneous, naturally led the people to believe that the object of the Government putting it down was simply to further the interests of the English manufacturers.

In connection with the Swadeshi Movement Barisal must take the place of honour, she has suffered for her faith in the cause more than any other place. Her sons have been the first in obtaining the crown of martyrdom.

Taking advantage of petty quarrels and absolutely unfounded rumours about European ladies being ill-treated and insulted at Barisal, the Government sent the Goorkha Police to the town, and posted punitive Police in two of its villages. We have heard of little boys being persecuted for singing 'Bande Mataram', and of respectable citizens being belaboured by the Goorkhas at Barisal and by the Assam Police at Serajunge and these will remain for ever a bitter memory. The introduction of the Goorkhas and the reign of terror that prevailed at Barisal will not be a proud record of British rule in India.

The Government is sadly mistaken if it thinks it can terrorize the people in this way. The people do not get so easily frightened now-a-days. They have learnt better.

It was here at Barisal that the respected leaders of the people were insulted by the Governor of the Province. Perhaps he thought that by thus treating them he would lower them in the estimation of the people. He was wrong in so thinking. These men on board his own steamer were his guests and it is regrettable that he should have forgotten the ordinary courtesies as between one man and another under those circumstances. These men, however, have risen in public esteem and I on your behalf tender them our best homage. Other places like Rungpur and Mymensingh have suffered, are still suffering and will suffer for their patriotism and devotion to the Swadeshi Movement.

But repressions can never extinguish a true cause though it may temporarily retard its progress. The Swadeshi Movement is a true and holy cause. Though its primary object is to foster the industrial and scientific advancement of the country, it has awakened in India a new sense of national consciousness and unity. It has united the rich and

the poor, the educated and the uneducated. It has kindled the spirit of self-reliance and self-sacrifice which the people have taken vows to uphold. If our repentance is genuine, if we are determined to do penance for the sins we have committed in the past by having too long neglected our motherland, we can never forsake, and can never be untrue to this great National Movement.

I cannot understand some people who advocate the cause of the Swadeshi Movement but condemn 'boycotting.' This is an economic question. One must naturally follow the other. The word 'boycott,' may be offensive to some ears, but the success of Swadeshi Movement means the abstention from or 'boycotting' of foreign goods. If we give preference to articles made in our own country and reject those made in foreign countries, this means boycotting the foreign articles. Why should it give offence to the Government or any body? Surely in our own houses at least we are our own masters and can choose what articles to buy and what to reject.

We are not an independent nation, we have no legislation of our own. We cannot by legislation keep foreign articles out of the market by building up tariff walls as Europe and America are doing. England has done the same. When cotton was first manufactured in England a succession of statutes were passed prohibiting the wear of imported cottons in order to foster the nascent industry. The only way by which we can protect our own industries is by eschewing or boycotting foreign goods.

Now about the boycotting of British goods in particular. Gentlemen, I am entirely in favour of it. The whole nation has in no uncertain voice petitioned the Government to annul the Partition. We have implored the interposition of the British people to redress our grievances, but all in vain! Our petitions have been slighted and the British people have turned a deaf ear to our grievances.

Not very long ago Macedonia and the tiny island of Crete made the whole of Europe listen to their grievances and yet we eighty millions of people cannot make our grievances heard by one Power!

The only thing that lies in our power is to keep up a vigorous 'boycott' of British goods. If we can only continue it for a few years our grievances will then force themselves upon the unwilling ears of the British people. It will at the same time give such an impetus to the industries which are springing up everywhere (for we have done wonders in Bengal in the course of ten months as far as the weaving

industry is concerned) that in the words of a writer in the 'New Age' the greatest curse under which India groans-the drainage of millions of pounds annually from our shores-will perceptively diminish.

The permanence of the success of this National Movement depends upon the education of the masses. This is the most important thing in the constitution of a nation, without which no nation can prosper. The cause of our lagging behind other nations in the race of progress is our want of education. It is a reflection on the British rule in India that what it could not accomplish in the field of education in 150 years the Japanese have done for Japan within less than 40 years.

Whatever confidence there was in the Government with regard to its educational policy, has disappeared since the passing of the Universities Act and the issuing of the Pedler Circular. The question of education therefore must be taken up by the people without further delay.

A right beginning has been made by the inauguration of the National Council of Education. The thanks of the nation are due to two very young donors viz., Babu Brojendrakishore Roy Chowdhury of Gouripur and Babu Subodhchunder Mullic of Calcutta for their munificent gifts. The National Council will have two departments-one literary and the other scientific and technical. Its object is to impart education both literary and technical on national lines as cheaply as possible. Amongst other things the Council, if well supported, and I have not the slightest doubt that it will be well supported by the Nation,-will establish industrial and technical schools all over the country to teach our youths how to make with small capital the necessities of life which we now import from foreign countries. We must make the National Council of Education an institution worthy of the name of Bengal. The whole of India is looking forward to our making it a success. It is a gigantic undertaking. Gentlemen, you must remember that the six lacs of rupees which we have got from the two generous donors, very handsome gifts though they are, are like drops in the ocean. In order to have a well equipped University or Institution we require something like a crore of rupees and what is a crore of rupees to a nation of 80 millions of people ? When England alone can have 7 or 8 Universities which are all supported by private donations, it will be a disgrace to us if we cannot support one University which will educate us in all the different branches of art and science that we require for our purposes here.

Of course it is not possible to secure such a large sum of money at once but if we one and all contribute our mite to its fund, in the course of a very few years it will amount to a very respectable sum.

Let us, therefore, support this National Council of Education with all our hearts so that we may in a short time raise it to the status of a full-fledged University which by imparting education on National lines will make men of us. By National lines we mean among other things inspiring students with a genuine love for and a real desire to serve their country. Without such education our Swadeshi Movement cannot have a permanent hold on the hearts of the people.

Now some people take a lot of coaxing before they are persuaded to believe in the truth of the Swadeshi cause but when the masses will be educated on national lines, when they will understand their own responsibilities and when they will feel that as a nation they will have to play an important part on the stage of the world, then the Swadeshi cause will need no preacher, no coaxing, no impetus from without, the impetus will come from within. We must by education open the eyes of our people to see and feel our degradation and humiliation and teach them to remember that though we are not treated by our rulers better than savage races as far as the Government of the country is concerned, we have not always been what we are now. We have had a civilization of our own. Our ancestors were civilized at the time when those of our rulers had not passed the stage of the state of nature. We have a glorious past and we must make our future as glorious. Henceforth to educate the masses on national lines must be the sacred duty of every educated citizen.

It may be that the Government may not recognize the degrees and certificates of proficiency conferred on the successful candidates by the National Council of Education.

If such contingency does arise, the Nation must be prepared to hold out prospects from them.

The capitalists must open their purses and engage the services of those trained in the technical department and the Zemindars and the mercantile class employ most extensively those educated in the general departments.

The Association for the Advancement of Scientific and Industrial Education ought to be congratulated on being able to send this year 44 young men to Europe, America and Japan. We hope more will be

sent every year. But what will those trained by the National Council of Education or these young men on their return do if the Nation will not make use of their services ?

Gentlemen, there is a splendid future before us if the Nation will only rise to the occasion and do its duty.

Gentlemen, we must pay special attention to another great problem that is before us. It is how to get rid of our inordinate craving for Government service. This desire has been the cause of our downfall and degradation, specially of that of my coreligionists. The only ambition of our life is to become Government servants, no matter what it brings to us.

A Bengali clerk whether Hindu, Mahomedan or Christian drawing Rs 20/- a month and working 10 or 12 hours' a day, is quite proud of his position and boasts of being a Government servant.

We have carried it to such an excess as to bring on ourselves the ridicule of the people of other parts of India who have prospered in trade. They wonder why we Bengalis instead of hankering after Government service, do not make use of our brains in other spheres of life. No wonder we are called a 'Nation of Clerks.' As now constituted what charm is there in Government service, which we cannot enter except through favouritism and influence ? The abolition of the system of open competitive tests has put an end to that effective stimulus which had been given to the efforts of many people towards self-improvement by the opening of a career as a reward; and an encouragement to intellectual merit alone. Now only those, be they competent or incompetent who can creep into the good graces of some high official will be taken into the service.

All the higher appointments are a special preserve for the ruling race and cannot be encroached upon by the despised Indians without the prestige of the service being lost.

The Indians however well qualified are considered fit only to hold subordinate posts and unfit to discharge the duties of higher posts. But experience shows that it is the ill-paid subordinate officers who really do the work of the departments.

The intelligent, deserving men of the country cannot get posts for which they can draw more than Rs. 700/- or Rs. 800/- after 25 or 30 years' service. Examinations for all the higher appointments are held in England where very few of our youngmen can afford to go to compete for them. We have repeatedly prayed the Government to hold

examinations simultaneously in England and India but to no purpose. If our prayers were granted, many of our young men would be eligible for the higher appointments—a prospect which the ruling race could only look upon with dismay. However competent our young men may be their claims must give way to those of the governing race.

Take for instance the Indian Educational Service. Some of the Indian Professors who are in many respects superior to many European Professors are only in the Provincial Service drawing much less pay than the European Professors of the Indian Educational Service. Even Prof. J. C. Bose, with a world-wide reputation was till very recently in the Provincial Service.

This kind of injustice is shown in every department of the Government. We are simply to be the hewers of wood and drawers of water for our rulers.

In the public service of our own country we have to play second fiddle.

It is better to deal in Swadeshi goods as a small shop-keeper than to seek employment under the Government under such humiliating conditions. We must make up our minds once for all not to be any longer called the 'Nation of Clerks.' No Nation has ever risen by service; nor will ever rise.

Service deadens the power of initiative and makes slaves of men.

To Trade then must we turn attention if we want to free ourselves from the shackles of slavery.

Even in Trade we are unfortunately hampered by the action of some misguided Government underlings.

Shop-keepers selling Swadeshi goods are often harassed by them. The Government in spite of its protestations and pretensions as to its being in favour of the Swadeshi Movement has taken up a hostile attitude towards the people of the country which has caused dissatisfaction and unrest all over the Province. The authorities instead of taking our recognized leaders in their confidence, have in their utter helplessness during the last eight or nine months introduced Russian method of Government by suppressing public meetings, prohibiting religious processions, interfering with the liberty of the Press and otherwise interfering with the rights and privileges of the people.

This is not the way to conciliate a people who have quite recently suffered an unprecedented calamity and are still in mourning. No

Government can be a good Government which has not the approval and support of the governed. This attitude will only further widen the breach between the ruler and the ruled.

In conclusion I wish to say a few words to my Mahommedan countrymen who by holding themselves aloof from the politics of the country sitting on the hedge in fact have created a situation from which they find it difficult to extricate themselves.

They have now become indifferent to everything that vitally concerns them. They are a mass of inaction, they are politically dead. How has it been about ? To my mind it has been brought about by their so-called leaders. These leaders in order to carry favour with the Government and thereby serve their own interests, have entirely disregarded those of the community and told the latter that by the dispensation of Providence they have been placed under a benign and perfect Government and that it would be impolitic on their part to concern themselves with the politics of the country. Whatever the Government condescends to give them they ought to receive with gratitude. A subject race has no rights and privileges, whatever they get from the Government they get as a favour. Their only duty is to pay taxes-and all other matters concerning their interests and welfare should be left to the superior judgment of the Government. If they were to interfere with the infallible judgment of the Government they would suffer in pocket by not getting into Government service. This doctrine the wisdom of which they have never challenged but which has been blindly followed by them has landed them where they are now. I do not know whether we Mahommedans have reached the lowest depths of degradation or not but as far as I can see the depth is low enough. It is difficult to know if there is any sphere of life in which we do not meet with disgrace and humiliation.

If we had exercised our own judgment and had not relied upon that of our leaders, we should have found out long ago the hollowness of this teaching. We have often been told that the Hindus are disloyal subjects because they dare question the infallibility of the Government. We Mahommedans should have nothing to do with them. Would to God that we could only see what we have gained by our policy and what the Hindus have attained by theirs ! Whatever the Government or our leaders may say we cannot dissociate ourselves from the Hindus. For good or for evil we are indissolubly bound together, we are the sons of the same motherland. Our political interests are identical with

those of the Hindus. In religious matters our interests may be the same as those of the Chinese or Zanzibar Mahommedans but in purely political matters we are in the same boat with our Hindu and Christian countrymen. Yet the perversity of our leaders has made us so blind as not to appreciate this plain truth.

We refrained from co-operating with the Hindus in the Congress Movement twenty years ago, having been tempted by offers of Government appointments.

But have we realised what has happened to us since then ! Whereas we have gone down lower and lower, the Hindus have made steady progress. The English people whatever they may be, are not wanting in appreciation. They respect the Hindus for their fearless criticism, and despise us at heart for our sycophancy and political cowardice, make use of us for political purposes. We were always deluded with the idea that if we kept ourselves aloof from all political movements, we should be in the good graces of the Government and monopolize Government posts. But have we done so ? In the High Court of Calcutta there are three Hindu Judges but not a single Mahommedan Judge ! Was there no Mahommedan lawyer in Calcutta competent enough to occupy a seat on the High Court bench ? Supposing there was not, the Government, if it wanted to encourage the Mahommedans, could have imported one from the Lahore or Allahabad Bar. But has it done so ?

In other departments too Mahommedan claims are overlooked simply because the so-called leaders will not exert themselves for fear of offending the authorities because there is no unity among the Mahommedans and there is no such thing as Mahommedan public opinion. This ought to convince us that if we want to be respected by others; if we wish to have our voice heard and influence felt, we must give up the doctrine that has been preached to us in season and out of season. We must think for ourselves, we must exercise our own judgment in matters that effect the welfare of the whole community. Take for instance the Partition question and Swadeshi Movement. Some of the Mahommedans have been told that the Partition is for the benefit of the Mahommedans because a lot of Mahommedans will get appointments. The cause of the downfall of the Mahommedans has been due to always looking after their individual interests at the expence of the interests of the whole community. Some of them will get Government post so they must support Partition, no matter what

happens to the interests of the dumb millions of their community. If they reflect for a moment on the reason why the Province has been partitioned, if they weighed the advantages and disadvantages that will accrue to the people on account of the Partition, they would have co-operated with the Hindus and the other Mahommedans in opposing the Partition. It is one man amongst us who has been proclaiming from the house-top that the Partition is a boon to the Mahommedans. Of course it has been a boon to him but whether it will be a boon to the Mahommedan community, time will show. For the support given to the Partition by his followers Sir Bamfylde has given them some sub-Inspectorships, and promised to provide the Mahommedans with other appointments. In my opinion the favour thus shown to the Mahommedans will do them more harm than good in the long run. The showing of favour in this way is nothing more than mere makebelieve on the part of the Government. It is to keep the Mahommedans separate from the Hindus, but it is a death blow to the idea of self-help and self-reliance without which the Mahommedans cannot ameliorate their condition. The Mahommedans always thought that they were the favourites of the Government and whether they paid much attention to education or not they would be provided for. How sadly mistaken they have been, they know now to their cost. About the Swadeshi movement too, some Mahommedans have been told by the so-called leaders that it is a Hindu movement and therefore disloyal. Again I say that without taking the statement of their leaders as gospel truth, if they were to think for themselves they would see that their salvation more than that of the Hindus lies in this movement. Can any Mahommedan in his senses deny that the impetus given by this Swadeshi movement to the weaving industry of the country is not benefiting the Mahommedan weavers all over the country? Can any body deny that many poor Mahommedan families in Calcutta, who used to starve before, are comfortably maintaining themselves because of the biri industry? Hindus, being admittedly more educated than the Mahommedans, who have to depend upon trade or manual labour.

Therefore the success of the Swadeshi movement all over India will be more beneficial to the Mahommedans than the Hindus. Yet some Mahommedans will not co-operate with the Hindus to make it a success ! Why ? Because they are told by their leaders not to do so.

I, therefore, appeal to my Mahommedan countrymen to give up their indifference to politics and join the Hindus and co-operate with them

in all matters concerning the welfare of the common motherland. Unless you are ready to migrate in a body to Arabia, Persia or Turkey your political interests will ever be the same as those of the people of other denominations in Bengal. The principle 'Divide and rule' is well-known to all of us. It is because we are divided that we have made it possible for our rulers to rule over us in the way we are ruled. United we stand, divided we fall is an adage which is most applicable to our case. Bengal with a united population-though the Government has done much to disunite them-will withstand any bureaucratic attempts to subjugate body and mind and will successfully resist any menaces or repressions. There is no denying that a cloud rests at present all over Bengal. It is a dark and heavy cloud and its darkness extends over the feeling of men in all parts of the country. But if we can only be united, that cloud will be dispelled. The dangers that surround us will vanish and we may yet have the happiness of leaving to our children the heritage of an honourable citizenship in a united and prosperous Bengal.

First Resolution

When the President had finished delivering his address, the first resolution asking the people to cease to co-operate with the Government was moved by Babu Matilal Ghosh. The following is the translation of the resolution as is embodied in the Bengali book 'Jajna Bhanga' by Babu Priyanath Guha of Barisal:

"The free and unrestricted use of *lathis* by the Police in broad day light under the orders¹ of the District and the Assistant District Superintendents of Police on the delegates assembled to welcome Mr. A. Rasul, the President-elect, and the arrest of Babu Surendranath Banerjea, one of the leaders, without any reason have conclusively proved that lawful administration has ceased to exist in the District of Barisal. Further, in view of the repressive measures that are being applied against the patriotic workers throughout Eastern Bengal and Assam, this Conference is of opinion that a proper and legal system of administration is no longer in existence in this part of the country. Therefore, no question the final settlement of which depends upon the workings of the present irresponsible Government will be discussed in this Conference and only those questions, the result of which can be obtained by the efforts of the people themselves, will be discussed."

This resolution was seconded by Pandit Brahma Bandhab Upadhyaya, Editor of *Sandhya* and supported by Pandit Gispati Kabyatirtha, Editor of *Howrah Hitaishi* and carried unanimously.

While the Conference was in the midst of discussion of this resolution Sri Surendranath Banerjea with Sri Aswinikumar Datta and others entered the pandal and the whole audience gave them a standing ovation with thunderous slogans of 'Bande Mataram'. Sri Surendranath Banerjea was carried to a table to which people rushed to take the dust of his feet. Cries of 'Bande Mataram' shook the pavilion. There was a great indignation against the action of the Police and the Magistrate. When the applause lasting well over ten minutes ultimately ceased, Surendranath stood upon the dais to deliver his inspiring address. It was such that the whole audience became mad with anger and grief. The whole assemblage took the pledge in the name of the Motherland to boycott all British goods. Many leading Mahommedans of position took part.

Passion reached its pitch when Sri Chittaranjan Guha Thakurta, the son of Manoranjan Guha Thakurta was carried shivering with fever, with bandages tied all over his body, to the pandal and placed on a table before all the delegates assembled. His father (Babu Manoranjan) then rose up and in evident excitement said that he was proud of his boy, and he would not have been the least sorry had his boy died under the constables' 'lathies' and recited a complete stanza from Michael's Meghnad' where Ravana extolled his heroic son Birbahoo when he heard the dreadful news of the death of his son. Another delegate Sri Brojendralal Ganguly, equally smashed and thrashed, was brought and placed by the side of this great boy. Then scenes of wild excitement ensued and streams of tears flowed down the cheeks of many of those present there. Pointing to the injuries sustained by them and the manner in which they faced Police atrocities for not agreeing to drop 'Bande Mataram' from their mouth, he wondered whether there would be any to use British goods soaked in the blood of patriots. An infuriated reply was returned from every mouth—"No, that is never going to be."

Upadhyaya Brahma Bandhab then recited the story of Brishoketu and said that the blood of the Bengalee boys gave the seal and sanction of Heaven to the cause of Swadeshi.

The Conference broke up in the evening ; and as the delegates dispersed to their homes they shouted the forbidden cry of *Bande Mataram* in the streets of Barisal. The Police did not interfere.

Presumably they thought they had done a sufficient day's work and left the delegates alone.

Thus ended the first day's sitting of the great and ever memorable Conference.

Second Day's Proceedings

The second day's proceedings commenced at 11 a. m. with the singing of the national song, *Bande Mataram*, with the whole house standing. This was followed by the singing '*Jai Jabe Jeeban Chale, Jagat Majhe Tomar Kaje Bande Mataram Bole*' by two members of the *Sevak Sampraday* of Bhawanipur and a few of the Anti-Circular Society.

There after Srijut Aswinikumar Datta read a letter from Srijut Bidhubhushan Datta, a Bagerhat pleader offering Rs. 2 and suggesting the erection of a monument on the spot where the blood of the Martyrs stained the earth and Srijut Surendranath Banerjee was put under arrest. A resolution was adopted deciding to put up a Memorial at that spot. Such was the enthusiasm of the people at this point that all the delegates stood up in hysteric excitement. Loud hisses were heard and ladies began actually to sob. People contributed whatever they had with them. Some handed over their rings and other valuable materials in lieu of money. Sri Kaliprasanna Kavaya Visarad, Editor of "Hitabadi" donated a sum of Rs. 100/-. While the collection was in progress, Srimati Sarojini Basu, wife of Sri Taraprasanna Basu of Narattampur in Barisal sent words that she would make a gift of the gold bangle on her right hand and was taking the pledge that she would not wear any gold bangle on her right wrist so long as the restrictive order on the singing of *Bande Mataram* had not been withdrawn. This decision of hers was conveyed in a letter she sent to Sri Aswinikumar Datta through her five-years-old son Sriman Hemchandra Basu.

The second resolution, moved by Choudhury Mahommed Ismail Khan, a zeminder from Choramuddi in Barisal, was on Partition of Bengal to express the people of Bengal's deep grief over, and vehement protest against the measure. Among supporters of the resolution were Sri Anandachandra Roy, Sri Anathbandhu Guha of Mymensing, Sri Kaminikumar Mukhopadhyay of Faridpur, Sri Rajanikanta Nandi of Comilla, Sri Jatramohan Sen of Chittagong, Sri Sachindra Sinha of Sylhet, Sri Kaminikumar Chanda of Cachar, Sri Indubhushan

Majumdar of Khulna, Dr. Abdul Hussain of Burdwan, Sri Becharam Lahiri of Krishnagar, Sri Mathuranath Ganguly of Hooghly and others. The resolution was adopted unanimously.

The third resolution related to the subject of National Education for the Bengalees. It was moved by Sri Yatindranath Roy Choudhury who explained the need of such education with a national bias. With an equally well reasoned speech, the resolution was seconded by Sri Hirendranath Datta. Among supporters of the resolution, which was unanimously adopted, were Sri Brojosundar Roy of Rajshahi, Sri Surendranath Sen of Barisal and Moulvi Hedayat Bux of Dacca. Many offered donations for building up a base for such National Education.

The resolution to give expression to Bengalees' determination to boycott British goods was moved by the President himself from the Chair. It was supported by Babu Surendranath Banerjea. His long one hour speech was in English but for the benefit of the ladies behind the curtain he delivered a short speech in Bengali also. Addressing the Conference Babu Surendranath Banerjea said:

That he would first speak in English, and then would address few words to the ladies in Bengali, who were within the sound of his voice. He thought he was not guilty of the slightest exaggeration when he said that no movement had, within the life-time of this generation, excited a deeper feeling or more widespread enthusiasm than the Swadeshi Movement. It was gossip of the family circles, talk of the marketplace, the theme of the inspiring eloquence of popular poetry. There was a good deal of misconception about the character of this movement in the minds of Englishmen. A high officer of Government had described the movement as the so-called Swadeshi Movement, (cries of "shame" "shame"). The speaker confessed that he did not understand what was the meaning of that phrase ; but possibly what was implied was that it was really a political movement masked in economical guise. With reference to this interpretation the speaker said that it was most inadequate and misleading. The movement was not wholly an economical one. It had received a considerable volume of impulses from political considerations. The movement was not wholly an economical one. It had received a considerable volume of impulse from political considerations. The movement was anterior to the Partition. It had been growing silently, majestically in the depths of the society. Its existence had been ignored amidst the tumult of political troubles. While the attention of the people was thus absorbed, infant Hercules

was growing in strength and stature, acquiring a reserve fund of energies for the accomplishment of its marvellous labour in future. What then was the character of this marvellous labour in future ? What then was the character of this movement ? It was not merely an economical movement. It was not a political movement. It was not even a spiritual or moral movement. But it was a catholic, all-pervading movement in which were centred the manysided activities of a growing nation. It seemed to the speaker as if some beneficent angelic spirit had whispered into the ears of our motherland the shibboleth of her political salvation. No matter whether an Indian was a Mahommedan or a Christian, no matter what language he spoke, no matter what might be his character and complexion, what might be his social status or religious belief, he voluntarily held aloft the banner of the Swadeshi movement and hid himself under it. It touched the tenderest chord in the hearts of the people. The Congress presented a platform for the educated classes in the highest development of national life. The Swadeshi movement presented a platform for the educated as well as the uneducated, the literate as well as illiterate. What Christianity was to the Christian world, what French Revolution was in Europe, the Swadeshi movement was in India. It was a living religion, living faith, a galvanising factor in our lives, calculated to revolutionise our character, our national life. God might be thanked that Lord Curzon was sent out as Viceroy to work out the salvation of this country and the most reactionary of Indian Viceroys would go down to posterity as the conscript-father of the Indian Nation. Looking at the matter from this point of view the people regarded the Swadeshi movement as of divine origin. The speaker considered himself and the people to working under the guidance of God's Holy-Spirit. This might be called superstition, or fanaticism, it might be called by what name they pleased, but if the people acted in such conviction, they were irresistible and invincible. They were proof against persecution (hear, hear). Gurkhas might be sent, the most distinguished leaders might be insulted, they might disperse public meetings by the armed police, they might establish a lawless reign of Polioe tyranny, they might do this and many other things besides, but the more the people were persecuted, the firmer they grew in their determination. In the blood of the martyrs was the theme of the church (cheers). The cause, consecrated by the sufferings of the youngmen and leaders, sufferings such as the speaker had witnessed the day before when youngmen were

beaten in his presence with regulation 'lathies' by the Police, consecrated by their sufferings, enabled by patriotic sacrifices, would grow in strength and vitality, and would become the determining factor in the lives of the people. The speaker asked his audience to mark the moral courage of our youngmen. They had read the story of the Mymensingh students. When they were sent into jail, British blankets were given to them, but they refused to use them and spent the night in shivering cold. The speaker here spoke about Rajendralal Saha, who the speaker noticed was in the meeting. (At this, the lad stood up and was loudly cheered by the whole Conference.) Continuing the speaker said that when the charge sheet was placed before the young lad for signature, what did he do ? He refused to sign it until a Swadeshi pen was given him and in fact a Swadeshi pen had to be brought though the Magistrate was of the type of Mr. Emerson of Barisal. Swadeshi fire was glowing in the hearts of the youngmen. The speaker exhorted the Conference to light up the Swadeshi fire in their hearths and homes, once more to take the solemn vow that to the best of their powers they would abstain from the purchase of foreign goods. But that was not all. They should be Swadeshi in their thoughts, ideals and inspirations, Swadeshi in their industrial and educational movements. The National University had been established. A mill was about to be started. The speaker desired to make an earnest appeal to his audience on behalf of the authorities of the mill to come forward with their subscriptions. He asked them to make it a success. If one mill were successful, ten mills would follow in the course of the next year. The hand-mill industry had received a strong impetus. On all sides there was a sign of national revival. The sun had risen and Japan had saluted the rising sun. China had shaken off the lethargy of ages. The sun would rise in his gorgeous splendour in this land of ours. The speaker asked the conference to prepare themselves for the advent of that day. He asked them to read the history of the world. Bushido was the word which was the secret of Japan's success. He exhorted the audience to sacrifice every thing. India was the land of great heroes of self-sacrifice. Buddha, Chaitanya, Nanak, Guru Gobinda, Rammohan Roy were heroes of self-sacrifice. Was the sacred fire, the speaker asked, that glowed in their bosom, extinct for ever ? He asked the Hindus to remember that in the dawn of the world, they were the teachers of humanity. He asked the Mahommedans to bear in mind that in the middle ages, they held aloft the torch of civilization. Hindus and

Mahommedans were brothers. He urged them to stand shoulder to shoulder, and offer their combined services for the spread of the Swadeshi cause and thus pave the way for the industrial, moral and political salvation of their great motherland. The speaker asked them to make her future worthy of her glorious past. He concluded his eloquent speech by asking his audience to repeat the Swadeshi Vow, which they did in one voice to his dictation.

After the long one-hour speech in English, Surendranath delivered a short speech in Bengali for the benefit of the ladies. The ladies signified their response to Surendranath's appeal for Boycott of British goods by '*Uludhwani*' which mingled with the song of '*Bande-Mataram*' from the men-folk creating an inspiring climate to which Surendranath asked the whole audience to take the following pledge:

"We solemnly take this pledge, in the name of God and of the Motherland, that we would discard foreign goods as far as possible and use Swadeshi goods instead. God help us in our resolve."

Other speakers in support of the resolution were Dr. Abul Hussain, Sri Bhupendranath Basu, Sri Sachindranath Basu and Sri Kaliprasanna Kavya Visarad. When the last-named was on his legs, Mr. Kemp with a posse of policemen made his appearance in front of the Conference pandal. Leaving other policemen behind, Kemp with a Deputy Magistrate, Sri Bhabaniprasad Neogi, came upto the pandal gate where he was obstructed by the volunteers in attendance, strong-built Mukundalal who demanded from Kemp either a ticket or an order from his captain. At this Kemp beckoned the Secretary of the Reception Committee, Sri Rajanikanta Das who came out with Sri Priyanath Guha. Kemp handed over to the Secretary the written orders of the District Magistrate, Mr. Emerson for the dissolution of the Conference. The order ran as follows: "As it appears from the Police report that the breaking up of a meeting of the Conference which is being held at a pandal in the town opposite the Brajamohan College is likely to be followed by unruly proceedings in the streets and noisy processions which have been forbidden by proper authority, I hereby order that the public or any persons are not to meet in the pandal or elsewhere for the said purpose and the public are not to form crowds in the streets. As it also appears likely that the crowds may meet in Raja Bahadur's Haveli and form unlawful assembly, it is hereby ordered that this is also forbidden."

The leaders decided that they would not dissolve the Conference

on their own and it was upon Kemp to do it. Thereupon the gates of the Conference were thrown open and both Mr. Kemp and Bhabani Babu appeared on the dais. Kemp possibly was a bit unnerved at the frequent utterance of lusty *Bande Mataram* by an excited house and coming near Surendranath said: "I hope I am safe when I am near you." The crowd was insisting on Kemp to shout *Bande Mataram* and volunteer Mukundalal placed his hand on Kemp's back to persuade him to utter the slogan. This ultimately Kemp did to the applause of the whole audience.

Mr. Kemp announced that the proceedings of the Conference could be allowed to continue if only the leaders would give an undertaking that none would shout *Bande Matram* in the streets after the close of the Conference. This very naturally the leaders refused to undertake. Mr. Kemp thereafter held out the threat that if the assemblage did not disperse, he would break up the Conference by force. On this there arose a difference of opinion among delegates, one section favouring dispersal while another opposed the idea. The former group included Sri Bipinchandra Pal, Sri Dinabandhu Sen of Barisal, while the other view point was led by Barrister Bijoychandra Chattapadhyay, Sri Krishnakumar Mitra and others. Mr Kemp then addressed the assemblage himself, offering the audience a chance to disperse. He told them further that if they did not do so themselves, they would be made to disperse by Police action. Great excitement prevailed in the Pandal on hearing what Kemp had to say. Sri Jogeschandra Chaudhuri asked the audience in tears: "Go back to your home ; let each of the home be a Conference venue and let such blazing fire come out from these homes as would burn all foreign goods."

The assemblage left the Pandal with shouts of '*Bande Mataram*.' At every stage they sought to vindicate the legality of that cry and with a solemn resolve by each one present to boycott British goods. The ladies present had left the Pandal earlier, immediately after the arrival of Kemp and his men at the Pandal, when leaders asked the female section of the assemblage to leave the scene. They withdrew, but since this was not the scheduled hour for them to go back to their homes the needed conveyance was not available immediately and so to protect themselves from the scorching sun took shelter in a nearby place. When the disturbances were over, they made for their destinations, but not before being subjected to all sorts of inconveniences because of this dislocation. Even the wife of the

President himself had to take shelter inside the Brajamohan College close by.

All left, save and except one and one alone. That was Krishnakumar Mitra, editor of *Sanjibani*. Like the senators of old when Brennus was entering Rome with his barbarian horde, he remained in his seat and would not move. Determination was painted upon his features ; his face was red with indignation.

He was prepared to face the consequences of the disobedience of authority. We argued, prayed and protested ; and it was with the utmost difficulty that we persuaded him at last to leave the *Pandal*.

All this humiliation, inconvenience and torture, because of aggressive behaviour and violent action of the Police should ever be remembered in the history of the country's struggle for freedom through different stages.

Thus ended the Barisal Conference of 1906

Some Relevant Information about the Conference

1. An Editorial Note of *The Bengalee* on 15. 3.1906

Bravo Barisal

The people of Barisal were subjected to the most outrageous treatment at the hands of Sir Bampfylde Fuller's Government and the memory of the oppression committed there by the Gurkha Military Police upon innocent and unoffending citizens will never wholly fade from their minds. And what is the result of all this persecution ? Foreign liquor has been banished from the entire district. The fact is that wherever the Swadeshi workers have been most persecuted by Government, there the Swadeshi spirit has become most active and vigorous. Indeed, such persecution has invariably proved to be a blessing in disguise. An ounce of fact is said to be worth a ton of theory. Does Mr. Morley still believe that popular feeling against the Partition is subsiding ?

2. *The Bengalee's Own Correspondent*

The Committee of the Provincial Conference decided on the evening of the 28th Feb. not to accept any delegation fee, though the Barisal Public have many calls upon their purse this year.

3. Appeal

The Bengal Provincial Conference meets at Barisal on the 14th and 15th April next. It is to be hoped that the several Districts of Bengal, District Associations, local political bodies, and organisations and the recognised public and political Associations will lose no time in electing their delegates.

Barisal
March, 21

N. C. Das Gupta
Joint-Secretary
Reception Committee

4. An Editorial Note of *The Bengalee* on 5 4. 1906

The Barisal Conference

The Bengal Provincial Conference, which will meet at Barisal on Saturday, the 14th instant, is, this time and with reference to the special circumstances of the case, an event of unusual importance. It is one more symbol of the indissoluble unity of the old and the new Province. The Conference that meets at Barisal for the first time after the Partition is not the Conference of the new Province, but of united Bengal. Our rulers may, in the pursuit of a ruthless and unsympathetic policy, separate us from our kith and kin ; but we are resolved to rise above the mandate of the Government and demonstrate how strong and indissoluble is the tie that binds us together. The Empire of our rulers extends over our broad fields, our majestic rivers, our beautiful forests and our high mountains. But the autocratic Government which rules in an unsympathetic spirit fails to establish its dominion over the hearts of the ruled. As a protest against administrative division of our Province, the hearts of our people, of East and West Bengal, have been drawn much closer together than they had ever been before ; and we

have no doubt that the enthusiasm and the numerical strength of the Barisal Conference will demonstrate the fact. We hear that special Police precautions are to be taken. We are prepared to believe almost any thing about the Government of the Eastern Province. Sir Bampfylde Fuller has proved, within the brief tenure of his office, how unfit he is to rule a new Province, seething with excitement and dissatisfaction. The presence of the Police will add to the dignity of the occasion. It will not intimidate any body and, least of all, the Barisal leaders. We earnestly appeal to our countrymen to muster strong at the Conference, if only to record their protest against the Partition of Bengal and their sympathy with Barisal in her recent misfortunes. There will be questions of the gravest moment that will be discussed. The reign of law, with which we are accustomed to associate British rule in India, has received a rude check in the Eastern Province. The Lyon circulars are still in force. They may be leonine in the terrors which they hold out, but they are illegal and unconstitutional. The Government has no legal right to interdict the crying of 'Bande Mataram' in the public streets or the holding of public meetings in public places or the marching of 'Sankirtan' processions through the public streets. A high legal authority has declared that these circulars are illegal. We had hoped that they would be withdrawn as soon as their illegality was pointed out. This has not been done. The circulars are still in force despite our protests. And the Government which is the fountain-head of law and order, sets the example of perpetuating an illegality of which the Government is the author. A more humiliating spectacle, unworthy of the traditions of British rule in India, no British Government, even amid the frenzy of the Mutiny or the general incompetency of the Lytton regime, ever presented. Even in the midst of the wild excitement, which seized the Anglo-Indian community during the Mutiny, Lord Canning insisted upon the observance of law. Even during the repressive and reactionary regime of Lord Lytton, the forms of law and legal procedure were never departed from. But it was reserved for Sir Bampfylde Fuller and his advisers to set an example of disregard of law and constitutional usages which has staggered the community and has shaken public confidence in the administration. The Government may rest assured that the Indian public will make a determined effort for the withdrawal of these illegal circulars and they feel that they are bound to be withdrawn. These and other questions of the gravest importance will be discussed at the

approaching Conference at Barisal, which we have no doubt, will be historical in its character. The Conference will stimulate the public life of the Province. We look forward to it to prepare a programme of public effort which, sanctioned by its authority will challenge universal support and inspire the zeal and enthusiasm of our public workers.

5. An Editorial Note of *The Bengalee* on 7. 4. 06

Barisal Provincial Conference

Police Espionage

According to the *Barisal Hitaisi* the Barisal Police are already busy collecting information in connection with the forthcoming Provincial Conference which is to hold its sittings at Barisal during the Eastern Holidays. A few days ago the local committee, appointed to raise funds for defraying the expenses of the Conference, visited the Chowk Bazar and succeeded in raising some money from the shopkeepers there. They were shadowed by a Police constable throughout their operations and after they have left the place, the policeman entered the shops and ascertained the amount each shop-keeper had contributed. The members of the committee do not mind in the least the attention bestowed upon them by the Police. On the contrary, their mission gains rather in dignity by their being followed by a policeman.

6. An Editorial Note of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* on 9. 4. 1906

The Barisal Conference

A distinguished countryman, now bed-ridden for a long time, whose "counsels of despair" published in these columns created such a sensation in the country, writes to us to say, that the Barisal Conference should eclipse the Jhinkergatcha meeting in every way. He himself had gone to Jhinkergatcha on that occasion, and was so deeply impressed with the grandeur and brilliant success of that undertaking that he has not yet been able to forget the memorable event, though more than twenty years have passed away since then.

There are many good reasons why every one who can afford,

should attend the Barisal Conference. As for the inhabitants of the district of Backergunj, of which Barisal is the chief town, they have excellent reasons why they should muster strong. Backergunj has more Mussalmans than Hindus, nay, it is emphatically a Mahomedan district. Yet Backergunj is the only District in the whole of Bengal which has been thoroughly disarmed.

Now, why should Backergunj, of all places, be singled out for this unenviable distinction and sought to be completely emasculated by rigorous enforcement of that cruel, barbarous, and suicidal Act, the measure of disarmament ? Yet, the Mussalmans in the new Province are said to be the "favourite wife" of Sir B. Fuller ! Those Mussalman leaders who are influenced by this endearing term of the ruler of the Province should go to the Conference and explain this queer situation. Will they do it? Of course not, for the simple reason that they have no explanation to offer. The Mussalmans of Backergunj should thus attend the Conference largely ; for, as most of them are cultivators, their necessity for guns to protect their crops from the depredations of wild animals is greater than that of their Hindu brethren, and it is by such movement as the Conference that they can get rid of the disarmament measure that has been fastened upon their district.

There are one or two other reasons why the Conference should be strongly represented by Mussalman element. The first is that it is to be presided over by a Mahomedan of high position in the person of Mr. A. Rasul, Bar-at-Law. There is not a more ardent and fearless defender of his country's rights and interests than this distinguished gentleman. Every Indian, specially every Mussalman, ought to be proud of him. The pick of the Mussalman community of Backergunj should, therefore, come forward and accord him a hearty welcome. But that is not the sole or main reason why they should attend. They are surely not so dense as not to be able to understand that by unity we gain, and by division we fall an easy victim in the hands of our opponents. Who suffers most by this disarmament measure, Hindus or Mussalmans ?

Then again, are the Mahomedans of Backerganj which mainly supplied the rice, not only of three-fourths of Bengal but also of other countries ? Backergunj is now practically in the throes of something like a famine! Neither they, in days gone by, nor their forefathers had ever known what starvation was. Even the poorest of them had enough foodgrains to enable them to secure two meals a day. And what is their

present situation ? Already some people, unable to bear the sight of their hungry wives and children roaming here and there for food, have, we are told, committed suicide! But the real pinch will commence a month or two hence. The Hindus and Mussalmans of the district should assemble in large numbers, take stock of their past and present conditions, and devise means for their very existence.

The outsiders should make it a point to attend the Conference for many a reason. One is that, divided as the Bengalee nation has been violently at the instance of a selfish, narrow-minded, and heartless ruler, it is essential that the people so divided by brute force for the purpose of weakening them as well as for creating fat berths for the ruling classes, should now, by embracing each other, that they are in heart and soul undivided, and they hope to remain so, Partition or no Partition.

The second reason is that no district has suffered so terribly from the disastrous effects of Partition as Backergunj. It therefore behoves the rest of Bengal, at least from a mere sense of gratitude, to proceed to Barisal and sympathise with the sorrows of those who for the furtherance of a common cause have suffered more than others.

Here is yet another good reason why the Conference should be attended largely by other district people. Do you remember how did Sir B. Fuller, the ruler of the newly-created Province, deal with Backergunj ? He insulted the leaders, having summoned them in his presence ; he and his subordinates punished the Hindus, without reason or rhyme ; he quartered a Military Police force ; he quartered a Punitive Police force ; etc etc. The one palpable object of all these proceedings was to cow down the leaders and their following in the district. And the authorities ventured to adopt these measures, believing that other district people would not come to their help.

As a matter of fact, if the people of India have now and then allowed themselves to be insulted in this matter by violently disposed rulers, it is because of the well-known division in our own camp. If one leader was whipped, others, for selfish purposes, stood aloof, and saw the spectacle from a distance. If one community was punished, the other looked on with indifference or approved of the punishment. It is thus that the Government is able to put the movements against the Hindus by tempting the former with a few subordinate posts in the Police Service. It is thus by our own folly, we give the bureaucrats and petty Czars opportunities to flourish and lord it over. Our paramount duty

therefore is to come forward with a sympathetic heart whenever we find our people insulted wantonly.

Now think for a moment the savage way the people of Backergunj were treated. First of all, it was assumed that the district was in "a state of mutiny," and something like a martial law was proclaimed at Barisal, its chief town. The military police quartered there almost killed a pleader and committed other activities. The two most important villages in the district were Banaripara and Narottampur, and they were kept in a state of seige by a punitive police, which also committed many an outrageous act. The ruler of the Province himself came to Barisal for a personal fight with the leaders and treated them in a manner which we do not know how to characterize.

An English ruler in high position is politeness itself. His culture and good manners will at once proclaim his high breeding. Those who have had the honour of an interview with Lord Minto will testify to this fact. His Excellency is the pink of courtesy, though he is the supreme ruler. Sir Andrew Fraser will also give you the impression that the ruler of a Province is extremely kind and polite. But how did Sir B. Fuller behave towards the Barisal leaders ? "Sit down", "get up", "answer, yes or no-here is my ultimatum"-it is in this fashion that he addressed the most prominent of these leaders. His object was no doubt to frighten the people by humiliating those who were in leading position.

But neither the leaders nor their following were frightened. On the other hand, they mean to show that they are British citizens, and so long they are under British rule, they refuse to be frightened, even when the threat is hurled at them by a latter-day Shaista Khan. If a Shaista Khan of modern times tried to trample down the self-respect of Hindu gentlemen of Barisal, their reply to that attempt is this Barisal Conference.

Such being the case, is it not the duty of every one of us to go to Barisal, if, for nothing else but to share the sorrows of our persecuted brethren, and to take, if it is so ordained by Providence, a last leave of them ?

7. Notice

Bengal Provincial Conference

For the information of the delegates who intend attending the Barisal Conference, we publish below a statement of the time and fare tables of the different routes:

From Sealdah to Barisal

Train starts about 10 p. m. arrives Khulna about 5 p. m.

1st class	2nd class	Inter class	3rd class Fare
Fare Rs. 10-4	5-2	2-9	1-11

Steamer leaves Khulna about 6 a. m. reaches Barisal about 8 p. m.

1st class	no 2nd class	Inter class	3rd class
Fare Rs. 9-0		3-0	1-8

Through tickets available from Calcutta at about the same fares.

From Goalundo to Barisal

(a) Goalundo to Chandpur

Steamer-Chandpur Express leaves Goalundo at about 12-30 p. m. After the Chittagong Express from Sealdah reaches Goalundo arrives at Chandpur at about 7 p. m. Halt for the night at Chandpur. (Passengers generally halt in country boats.)

(b) Chandpur to Barisal-leave by Despatch Steamer at about 7 a.m. and reach Barisal at about 3 p. m.

Or

By Naraingunge Mail Service which starts at about 9-30 a. m. and reaches Barisal at about 5 p. m

1st class	2nd class	Inter class	3rd class
Fare 4-0	no 2nd class	1-13	Rs. 0-14-6

From Naraingunge to Barisal.

Steamer leaves Naraingunge at about 5-30 a. m. and reaches Barisal about 5. p. m.

1st class	2nd class	Inter class	3rd class
Fare Rs. 6	no 2nd class	Rs. 2-11	Rs. 1-5-6

8. *The Bengalee's Own Correspondent* on 10. 4. 06

We again assure intending delegates and visitors to the Conference that there is no epidemic either of cholera or small-pox at Barisal. The health of the town is excellent. Delegates coming by the Khulna

Railway will find our volunteers waiting at the Khulna Station. Those coming from Dacca side will meet volunteers at Chandpur. All arrangements are almost complete. Barisal is trying her best to give a suitable reception to the delegates. God knows if she will succeed. Babu Aswinikumar Datta saw the Magistrate this morning and asked his permission for torch-light processions to receive President-elect and other distinguished visitors. This was refused. Mr. Rasul the President-elect reaches on Thursday night, and Babu Surendranath and others on Friday night. The number of delegates from outside the district exceed 500. Local delegates will considerably exceed that figure. The Pandal will accommodate five thousand souls, including 400 ladies. People from different parts of Backergunge are daily pouring in. The whole district is up and doing ; even the poorest peasant is taking a lovely interest in the matters connected with the Conference. All sections of educated community are working with tremendous energy-many with a considerable sacrifice of income in this year of scarcity.

9. An Editorial Note of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* on 12. 4. 1906

The Main Work of the Barisal Conference

The first work of the Barisal Conference, which commences its sittings from Saturday next, is to devise methods whereby our own house may be put into order. For, the terrible fact need not be concealed that we are in an extremely bad way. If the relation between the people and the rulers is much worse than it was before, the deep feeling of nationality which was evoked six months ago by the Partition of Bengal, has considerably abated. The immediate and the most important duty of the leaders of the country, who are assembling at Barisal, is therefore, to carefully deliberate on the situation, and adopt measures for the purpose of removing the present disorganized state of our society and paving the way for the regeneration and the onward progress of the nation.

Every one knows how Provincial Conferences are usually conducted in this country. What is done now is that a good many of our leading men sit in deliberation, once a year, to take stock of the present state of the Province, and make speeches and pass resolutions. Possessing no political authority either to remedy a defect or to supply a deficiency, the conclusions they arrive at practically mean nothing.

They have to send the results of their deliberations to the rulers of the land for their kind consideration. They can, however, take no action to compel the latter to pay proper attention to their decisions. Knowing this very well the rulers have adopted the policy of silence or contempt. Are the Indians to continue this method or replace it by a more practical one ? That is the momentous question which the assembled delegates at Barisal will have to settle. Dogs bark to draw attention, and, when no heed is given to their appeal, they of necessity give up barking—that is what their animal instincts teach them.

There are mainly two ways open to us to improve our condition : one is by political agitation, and the other by self-reliance. We might have eschewed political agitation altogether if we had any real authority in our hands. But as all power has been monopolized by the Government, we find it impossible to get on without some sort of official help. Political agitation is thus a dire necessity with us, and it must be kept up. But our main efforts should be directed in putting our own house into order. That is a work which is far more important than political agitation, and it ought to be taken up in all seriousness for the very existence of the nation.

First of all, many of our wants and grievances are of our own making. It is quite within our power to remove them without appealing for any official help. Thus, one of our complaints is that the Government is indirectly encouraging the vice of drinking by various means. The remedy is in the hands of the people. If they do not drink, the authorities cannot compel them to do it. Another complaint is that foreign manufactures are ruining indigenous industries. Well, the remedy is—don't use articles manufactured in other countries. There is no doubt that litigation is eating into the vitals of the nation. But why do you resort to law ? Do not litigate and the evil will die of itself.

The Police here are terrible ; the Magistrates convicting ; the criminal laws very severe; the punishment excessive ; and even the highest judicial court executives to a considerable extent. But if they do not quarrel amongst themselves, neither the Police, nor the Magistrate will be able to touch hair of theirs, nor will they have to do anything with the High Court. Even when they have any unavoidable disputes among themselves, they can avoid Government officers by settling most of them out of Court. In this way not only are a large number of our grievances removable, but we are quite able to remove them ourselves.

As a matter of fact, we can secure our perfect freedom only by giving up litigation and foreign goods. When we are at home we are as free as an Englishman. But the moment we enter the precincts of a court house, we feel that we are in a different element and we are breathing a different atmosphere. It is then that we are reminded of our utter helplessness and the lordly majesty of the Judge, the Magistrate, the Police officers, nay, even of constable and the peon, armed as they all are with more or less sovereign power. Indeed, the paraphernalia of the courts and offices are bound to produce a most chilling and emasculating effect even upon the stoutest heart. Why should we seek these demoralizing evils when we can easily avoid them ? Similarly on no occasion should we feel our worthlessness more acutely than when we have to use a foreign manufactured article. What can be more rewarding than this that, we have to go naked and eat our food without salt if Manchester were to cease sending us its cloths and Liverpool its saline manufacture ?

A vast number of our people also suffer from their own ignorance as well as of the apathy of the State. The agriculturists form the 80 per cent of the population, but they have no good markets to sell the produce of their fields. They have no knowledge how to improve agriculture. The artisan and manufacturing classes are dying fast. Why? Because they have no idea as to how to maintain the old and revive or develop the new arts and industries. Then thousands of people die from diseases which they bring upon themselves by violating the laws of sanitation. By simply explaining these laws to them the majority of them can be saved. They are all anxious to improve their own condition but they have none in the world to lead them on.

How often do our people purposelessly cut one another's throats and pay the penalty of their own folly. Zemindars and Zemindars, ryots and ryots, Zemindars and ryots, nay patriots and patriots quarrel with one another ; villagers have their internal and interminable feuds ; brothers and friends break each other's heads. These internecine disputes are bringing untold miseries in the land. Where is the good Samaritan to point out to them a better way of dealing with themselves and their neighbours ? In Christian countries, people have at least their pastors to go to, but here we have none. Let the assembled leaders at Barisal put their heads together and show the way for the real regeneration of the country.

10. An Editorial Note of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* on 13. 4. 1906

A scheme for the consideration of the Barisal Conference

Here is a simple plan which the Barisal Conference may adopt on an experimental measure for putting our house into order. Let a Central Committee, composed of one or more representatives of each district, be formed to look after the affairs of the Province. Let the first work of the Committee be to appoint one or more paid agents in each district. Let these agents be either under the control of the Central Committee, which must be located at Calcutta, or under district or local Committees.

It should be distinctly borne in mind that no good work would be done without a paid agent. Great care should be taken in selecting the agent, for much depends upon his tact, judgment and patriotism ; and he should therefore be a capable man with a respectable salary. Of course each district must pay for its own agent, though the Central Committee must undertake to incur the preliminary expenses, that is to say, bear the expense of the agent, say, for the first few months. This year the experiment may be tried with regard to two or three districts such as Backergunj, Faridpur and Mymensingh.

Let the agent go into the interior to look after the needs and grievances of the masses of his district and suggest remedies to remove or redress them. His duties will be naturally of a varied character. He should commence his work by opening communications with the leading men of the district and seeking their co-operation. He should be able to secure the sympathy and support of the majority of them ; and when he fails to move an essentially needed person, he should go to the length of giving 'Dharna' if necessary in his place to rouse him to his sense of duty. And above all, he must keep himself in touch with the Central Committee. In short, while he should watch over the wants and grievances of his own district people, he should at the same time keep the members of the Central Committee informed of his doings, and invoke their aid when necessary.

Here is a programme of work for the agent. Let him form Village Committees for the purpose of giving up foreign articles. Let him form a league in every central place for preaching peace and good will, and dissuading people from quarrelling and going to law. Let him

form arbitration courts in important villages in his district, and make their inhabitants swear that, as far as possible, they will settle their disputes out of court. All these could be done in every district, for materials were plentiful. They were not done, as none had yet worked in that direction.

Here is a list of other works for the agent. Let him introduce new industries ; let him teach the people the laws of sanitation. Many people are so ignorant as not to know that the water they drink is oftentimes as deadly as poison itself. Then again, let him play the rôle of a peace-maker. If he finds the feeling between Hindus and Mussalmans bitter, let him, with folded hands, appeal to both to forgive and to forget, and live as good neighbours in peace and amity for their mutual benefit. Let each district, at least in the beginning, appoint two paid agents, one Hindu and one Mussalman.

We shall point out specially one kind of work which has just now engrossed public attention, and which can be performed with great success by the agent. A great impetus has been given to the indigenous handloom industry by the Swadeshi Movement. Thousands of handlooms which had been kept idle for years and years have been brought into operation. But our weavers are yet not to eke out a decent living for themselves as they have to buy Manchester yarn at a dear price. The agent can however make efforts to re-introduce our 'Charka' or spinning wheel, which has been stilled, and thereby remove the yarn difficulty.

Only three or four decades ago, when Manchester cotton fabrics were unknown in this country, it was the 'Charka' which supplied the yarn necessary for weaving cloths for the 78 millions of Bengal. The 'Charka' will again satisfactorily perform the same function if it could be again introduced. It would give employment to millions of poor people, and at the same time, supply our weavers with the yarn they need. But where is the person to induce the villagers to betake to an occupation which was almost universal in this country only 40 years ago ? One of the greatest advantages of the 'Charka' system is that, it will spin fine yarn with coarse and short-stapled cotton. Here is a grand work for the Conference agent, and he will deserve well of the country if he succeeds in reviving only this 'Charka' industry in his district.

It should be distinctly understood that the agent must on no account come into collision with the district authorities. Nay, it should be his

duty to make friends with such of them as are sympathetic and friendly. He may keep the latter and the newspapers acquainted with what is going on in the district. Let him proclaim a water or food scarcity when one is apprehended. Let him announce a disaster when one has occurred in any part of the district ; let him expose wrong-doing, official and non-official, and if he can do only one hundredth part of the work that is in his power to do, he cannot only bring comfort and happiness to tens of thousands but secure an honest living for himself and make his stay worth the pay that he is expected to draw from his district.

As regards political agitation, the agent should be instructed to hold public meetings at important centres in the district. In this way political education should be imparted to the masses. If only half a dozen advanced districts of Bengal follow this method, then an organization may be formed in this country in regard to which it will not be possible for the Government to adopt the present policy of silence. If the Government do not now pay any heed to the deliberations of the Congress and Conferences, it is because they are more artificial than real; they are spasmodic and not continued in their efforts. But if we can again rouse the feeling of the nation to that high pitch which had been kept up for six months together in Bengal and utilize it properly, the Government will be bound to pay that respect for the deliberations of the leaders of the country which it now withholds. In short, it is then only we shall be able to compel the attention of the Government to our wishes when we have formed ourselves into a nation, and secured a united national voice.

Another grand work before the Conference is to make an arrangement whereby the people of the two Provinces should never forget that,-Partition or no Partition,-whether they live under one Administration or two-they are a united nation ; that their interests in every matter, political, social, educational and economic, are one and the same ; and that in weal or in woe, they will always stand by each other. If they rise, they will rise together ; if they fall, they will fall together ; in short let no Curzon or Fraser separate them whom God has united.

11. Return of Conference Delegates

(a) *An Enthusiastic Ovation*

The Conference Delegates headed by Babu Surendranath Benerjea, returned to Calcutta very early on the morning of Wednesday, the 18th April and received a magnificent ovation.

The train carrying the delegates was timed to reach the Sealdah Station at about 5-30 a. m. ; but long before that hour and even so early as 4 a. m. people began to wend their way to Sealdah from almost all corners of Calcutta and its suburbs. By a previous arrangement, parties began to fall in at the several squares, notably at the Beadon Square and the College Square at about 3-30 a. m. and in an orderly procession began to march towards Sealdah in files of four deep, carrying coloured flags and shouting 'Bande Mataram'. It was an awe-inspiring sight-this band of processionists,-of all ages representing the pick of the Indian Society, men of light, leading and position. Great enthusiasm prevailed, and an ardent desire was manifest in every face to welcome the gallant band of delegates who, in the discharge of their duty towards their country, had been the innocent victims of a brutal and cruel prosecution.

At the Sealdah Station

At Sealdah, which was packed to its utmost capacity, the gathering waited patiently for the arrival of the train. No sooner did the train arrive and Babu Surendranath and party come down than tremendous shouts of 'Bande Mataram' were raised, and the party was garlanded. Pandit Kabyabisharad was by the side of Babu Surendranath ; and Babu Krishnakumar, with the indomitable Anti-Circular Society boys, got down from the train singing 'Jay jabe jiban chale, Mago sudhu Jagat majhe Tomar Kaje Bande Mataram bole.' They had their luggages on their heads ; and like veteran soldiers, they with pride in their face and defiance in their eyes marched in military array from the train to the head of the procession. It was a sight never to be forgotten. Old men-very old Brahmins-blessed Babu Surendranath. The landau in which the illustrious martyrs had to drive, was unhorsed and drawn by enthusiastic young men. The route followed was Harrison Road, and the procession stopped at College Square where from the carriage Babu Surendranath addressed the vast assemblage.

He said that he had been making speeches all night at the stations where their train halted. At every station hundreds had gathered and vowed to boycott British goods ; and he urged the assembly to vow again not to allow anybody to touch foreign goods by every legal means possible. He said that the indignities heaped upon him were nothing in comparison to those offered to the other delegates and the Anti-Circular Society boys. He asked the assembly to retaliate by a strict boycott of foreign goods and specially British goods.

After he had done speaking in English he spoke a few minutes in Bengali. But his voice was as hoarse as possible. He and his brother delegates and the Anti-Circular Society men, though looking a little jaded, were all flushed with enthusiasm.

Moulvi Muzummar Rahaman and Moulvi Leakat Hossain, on behalf of the Mussalman community expressed their great indignation at the cruelties perpetrated at Barisal.

A big meeting was then held at the North-East corner in front of the Anti-Circular Society office and show rooms. The returned masters embraced Babu Panchkari Banerji and others most heartily. Tears tricked down the cheeks of everybody and it was with the greatest difficulty that the people assembled could stop crying out loudly. The speech of Babu Krishnakumar Mitter was listened to with rapt attention. He narrated most faithfully how the members of the Anti-Circular Society-one of whom was Sriman Chittaranjan Guha Thakurta (son of Babu Manoranjan Guha Thakurta) who was mortally wounded by a Policeman-obeyed the orders of the leaders-how they patiently submitted to the cowardly beating, how they kept on crying 'Bande Mataram' and how they tried to keep intact their badges. Having described the first day's cowardly atrocities of the Barisal Police, he took his seat, leaving Pandit Kabyabisharad and Pandit Gispati Chowdhuri to narrate the second day's details. Pandit Bisharad, with one of his hands swollen and injured, spoke for some time. He unfolded the cowardly conduct of the Policemen ; and when he described the foolish and ridiculously arrogant behaviour of Mr. Emerson towards Babu Surendranath, the audience could scarcely contain themselves, and they all vowed to take dire revenge by strictly boycotting foreign goods and specially British goods. After him, rose Pandit Gispati Kabyatirtha who narrated the inhuman barbarities at Barisal in telling words. From Narayangunj, they had guarded the Policemen ; and the house in which the Anti-Circular boys lived was

guarded by a strong detachment of Police who mounted guard all day and night over the inmates. Some had been tried to put them into difficulty by throwing some 'Gupties' where the boys had held an Exhibition. But thank God the Anti-Circular men had informants too; and they got timely notice. This clandestine and surreptitious throwing in of 'Gupties' into their Exhibition was nothing but a dodge to make them criminally liable. The Anti-Circular boys, on getting this information at once removed their Exhibition from the house. Babu Krishnakumar Mitter pushed away the cowardly constables with his hands and the constables had to fall back full ten cubits at each single push of the old grey-headed Babu Krishnakumar.

After Pandit Kabyatirtha spoke, the Secretary of the Anti-Circular Society, Babu Sachindrapraead Bose spoke. He said that when the leaders had all left Barisal for Rahamatpur, a steamer full of Military Police, arrived at Barisal, and the town was full with rumours that the Military Police would make a sortie and kill or imprison the Anti-Circular boys. Old pleaders fell to the feet of Sachindra and urged him to do away with his 'Bande Mataram' and Anti-Circular Society placards. This he refused to do ; and happily the sorties did not take place that day, though it was feared that the Police would repeat the oppressions of the Gurkhas. Sriman Chittaranjan was doing well and the assistant Secretary of the Anti-Circular Society, Sriman Phanibhushan Bandyopadhyay, was also well and would return to Calcutta today (Thursday). Out of fifteen badges that the Anti-Circular Society boys had, thirteen were snatched away by force by the Police. When Mr. Kemp, the District Superintendent of Police, himself struck Sriman Phanibhushan and when his cowardly assault brought forth a gushing stream of blood, the noble boy offered a little blood to Babu Krishnakumar and said, 'I in the name of the young Bengal offer this blood to old Bengal.'

(b)

The unwarrantable repression and ruthless assaults on the delegates and the illegal dispersion of the Conference by the Barisal Police is the talk of the day and the disgraceful acts throughout on the part of the irresponsible Barisal authorities has infused a new spirit into the cause of Swadeshi movement which is being pursued with greater earnestness.

After the dispersion of the Conference on the 16th April last, the Khulna-Narayangunj mail steamer left Barisal Ghat at about 7-30 a.

m. amidst deafening cries of 'Bande Mataram' with about 200 delegates. As soon as the steamer left the Ghat there was a whole-day Conference of delegates on the upper-deck of the steamer. The above Conference was represented by Dacca, Mymensingh, Faridpur, Noakhali, Tipperah, and Chittagong delegates. The proceeding of the Conference began at about 8 a. m. and closed at 6 p. m. and for these 12 hours one delegate spoke after another but all on the same subject viz., to improve and develop the indigenous resources of the country and to boycott the foreign goods, British goods in particular. A British stick and the neck-tie of Babu Kaminikumar Chanda of of Silchar were thrown into the river. At Muladi station a lady was seen with a British churi on her hands. A delegate observed "it is a pity and surprising that any lady in the district of Backergunj should hold British churi even now." On which the lady silently broke it immediately and threw it into the river. In fact I could not help shedding tears, and all the way the cry of 'Bande Mataram' rent the skies. Mr. Lees, Collector of Tipperah, was on the steamer. Nobody knows why he went to Barisal a day before the sitting of the Conference and why he left a day after it was over.

12. A letter to the Editor of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*

A reply to official version.

Sir,

We have read carefully the report submitted to the Government by Messrs. Le Mesurier, Emerson and Kemp which you had published in your issue of the 17th instant and consider it our duty to make the following observations thereon.

Mr. Le Mesurier's report begins with an assumption that there was every likelihood of a breach of the peace during the Conference. We are naturally inclined to ask what were the grounds for such an assumption. The Provincial Conference has been meeting year after year for many years and the members of the Conference have been representative men from the different districts of Bengal. They were to meet again this year at Barisal. Surely, there could be no apprehension of a breach of peace from such men. Mr. Le Mesurier refers to previous disturbances in the district. Even the worst enemy of Barisal cannot say that there was anything but quiet and peace in

the town for many years. It was never ruffled except in November last by "lathies" of the Gurkhas who were posted here to suppress a fancied mutiny. We cannot understand how desperate and lawless men of the district, "who" according to Mr. Le Mesurier, "have made it a synonym for homicide, riot and dacoity for many years", could be connected with the Conference, and why, as Mr. Le Mesurier suggests, they should come into the town during the assemblage caused by the Conference and "turn events to their own purposes." The reports of the administration of Police for some years exhibit almost a clean record for Backerganj in reference to dacoity and a steady decrease in rioting, and trace most of the murders in the district to intrigues with women, domestic quarrels and land disputes. We leave it to you to judge if the Conference or any association with it, could have any the remotest connection with any such purposes.

Mr. Le Mesurier seems to assert that the experience he had acquired as Magistrate of the district helped him very much in coming to the decision that no processions should be allowed to pass through the streets lest they might cause "riot or other disturbance." Many processions passed through the streets during his Magisterial regime. May we ask him to state candidly if there was any riot or disturbance at Barisal on any of those occasions ? Many Swadeshi processions, some of them attended by eight or ten thousands of men, passed through the streets of this town even this year from July up to the middle of November. Did they ever cause any disturbance whatsoever ? The Government reports have borne uniform testimony to the moral and educational progress of Barisal. In the face of such facts, if the Commissioner interdicted all processions, had he any justifiable reason for it, or, was it merely to insult public sentiment ?

The Commissioner says "no protest was made, no appeal filed to me, none * * * who called on their old Collector made any attempt to alter my decision in the matter."

With due deference, we must say that we did not know that he had so decided and therefore none of us could refer to it in our interviews with him. Our conversation with the Magistrate was restricted to only the reception of the President and the delegates at the "Ghat" and escorting them from there to their quarters. There was hardly any time for appeal; and even if we had, we would not have been inclined to appeal as we had a fair knowledge of the ways of Sir B. Fuller's Government.

It is true that we restrained people from shouting "Bande Mataram" in response to the cries of the delegates in the steamers, but this fact does not prove, as the Commissioner would have it, that "local feeling was not strong against the prohibitions of that cry." There is nobody with the slightest love for the motherland, who would not chafe at the interdiction of such a sacred cry. We restrained ourselves simply because such a cry would be immediately followed by the lawless procedure of regulation "lathies" of which we had already had some experience, and it would be difficult to say what excesses might not have been committed under cover of night.

In the morning of the 14th when it was decided that "Bande Mataram" should be shouted in the streets to test the legality of the prohibitory circular the members of the Reception Committee who were present in the discussions also agreed, but they told the delegates plainly that as soon as there was any such shout, "lathies" would be freely used by those who are paid by the public to keep the peace. The members of the Reception Committee joined the other delegates in escorting the President from the Raja Bahadur's "Haveli" and the President of the Committee just after Surendra Babu's arrest offered himself to be arrested. The statement that they were not in the party is nothing short of a slur upon them.

That there might be no obstruction to traffic it was arranged that the delegates should follow the President in lines of "threes" keeping to one side of the road. The President's carriage moved on and we followed without any disturbance. When most of the Calcutta and mofussil leaders in lines duly formed had come out and advanced, as soon as the first line of three of the members of the Anti-Circular Society numbering not more than eighteen in all with their blazing badges appeared from behind the gate of the "Haveli", the policemen fell to cudgelling them before any shout of "Bande Mataram" was raised. From what we have been able to ascertain, we understand Mr. Kemp, the District Superintendent of Police, had not even the goodness to ask them to disperse before they were so roughly handled. On the contrary, even before they had entered the "Haveli", he himself dealt blows to one of them.

In reference to Mr. Le Mesurier's remark that "the local Committee were ready to carry out the implied arrangement with the Magistrate and did in fact try to do so at first," we have to repeat what we said before that our conversations with the Magistrate were confined simply

to the reception of the President and the delegates just on their arrival and did not proceed an inch further and this is a sufficient answer to the charge that we "evaded responsibility" and "did not communicate with the authorities."

We conclude our observations on the Commissioner's report by saying emphatically that there have been no disturbances made by the people here, the delegates either local or foreign had not even walking sticks with them. It was the "lathies" of the Policemen only that created a disturbance. Just after the assault of the Police and the arrest of Surendra Babu, the delegates proceeded to the pandal shouting "Bande Mataram" all the way, but that did not cause the slightest disturbance or breach of peace. We are at a loss to find out why an increase in the District Police reserve is needed. The Commissioner himself says that the local leaders have not been the cause of any disturbances, that it was the foreign delegates who wrought the mischief, how is he then consistent in thinking of quartering a punitive police here and saddling the residents with the cost of their maintenance ?

Mr. Emerson says that Babu Surendranath was produced before him in his office in his bungalow where he does his work. If he converted his room into a court where the trial of Surendra Babu was going on was it not an anomaly to insult and turn out Aswinikumur Datta who wore his national dress and Babu Biharilal Boy on the ground of their having no hats on ?

The report alluded to by Mr. Emerson and Mr. Kemp which said "that it was intended at the close of the Conference that the whole body should parade the town shouting "Bande Mataram" was absolutely unfounded. There was no such proposal. The reference in this connection to Rajanikanta Das's letter has no significance. Since he was asked by Mr. Kemp to inform him whether there would be any procession to escort the President to the Pandal or not. No suggestion whatever was made to him about the formation of any procession after the close of the Conference. Mr. Kemp's statement that Rajanikanta Das after consulting some one in another room in his house said that there was some foundation for the report of a contemplated procession after the Conference is evidently based on a misconception. No body ever told Rajani Babu of such a proposal. His reply clearly referred to Mr. Kemp's question of having a procession to escort the President and not to any procession at the close of the Conference. A perusal of

the written reply which he sent after enquiry on that day, will show that he referred to that question and nothing else.

Aswinikumar Datta,
President, Reception Committee
Rajanikanta Das,
Secretary, Reception Committee

13. An Editorial Note of *The Indian Mirror* on 18. 4. 06

Sir Bamfylde Fuller and the Barisal Incident

The more we think of the Barisal incident, the more we are surprised that such a thing could at all occur under British rule. Sir Bamfylde Fuller has commenced his autocratic rule in right earnest, and it is time that he should be disabused of his extraordinary notions and curbed of his peculiar malady. The public had heard various reports of his despotic conduct but they could not believe that he would proceed to such lengths as to stop the proceedings of a constitutional assembly by sheer force. From a perusal of the report relating to the *fracas* at Barisal, it is manifest that the Magistrate was acting merely under the orders of the Local Government. Why of all persons was Babu Surendranath Banerjea singled out for prosecution? And if he was prosecuted, was he not entitled to call evidence for his defence? As a matter of fact, he expressed his wish to examine the District Superintendent of Police, but his request was curtly refused by the District Magistrate. In the special circumstances of this case, the District Magistrate of Barisal by reason of the part which he had played in the affair, was incompetent to try the case. It is an established principle of the British law, strictly enforced by the High Courts, that a Magistrate is not competent to hear any case in which he is interested in his capacity as an executive officer. But we forget. It is not British law but Fuller law that has come into force in the new Province of Eastern Bengal and Assam! Sir Bamfylde Fuller is mistaken, if he thinks that his tyrannical proceedings will end quietly. He has done what the Governor of a Russian Province alone is capable of doing. After this incident, there is no one outside Bedlam who will hold for a moment that Sir Bamfylde Fuller is at all fit to exercise the authority

of a Lieutenant-Governor. The Partition has been a blow to the Bengalis in all conscience, but the Fuller administration seems to have paralysed all their limbs. Sir Bamfylde Fuller was bold enough to say, the other day, that, beyond one or two angry speeches in Parliament, nothing will result from the Anti-Partition agitation. He is probably under the belief also that beyond one or two angry speeches in Parliament nothing will be heard regarding his despotic proceedings in East Bengal. We can tell His Honour, with all deference that he labours under a hallucination, if he imagines that his unjust and repressive measures will be passed over in silence, either by the public in this country or by the Government in England. Anyhow, there can be no mistake that Sir Bamfylde Fuller has set the country ablaze by his thoroughly unconstitutional and un-British manner of governing the Province committed to his charge. Who ever heard of a Lieutenant-Governor coolly directing such proceedings as attended the Barisal incident ? The affair is one which concerns not only the Bengalis, but the entire Indian community throughout the country. Fancy, a esteemed leader of the people like Babu Surendranath Benerjea put into the felon's dock, and respectable delegates beaten by *paharawalas* as if they were dangerous criminals ! What would have been the consequences of such a thing in any part of the United Kingdom ? Let Sir Bamfylde Fuller answer it. From what we have seen of him, we think he is not only wanting in tact and judgment, but absolutely devoid of the qualities of a ruler. Therefore, we say, the sooner he is relieved of his office as Lieutenant-Governor, the better for the peace of his own mind and for the good of the Government itself. We hope, full report of the Barisal incident have by this time been telegraphed to the English Press as well as to the Secretary of State. We hope also no time will be lost in testing by proceeding in the High Court, the legality of Emerson's action in arresting and fining Babu Surendranath Banerjea. The Barisal incident should be condemned by the public.

14. An Editorial Note of *The Bengalee* on 18. 4. 1906

The Barisal Barbarities

It is the unanimous opinion of the thinking portion of the people of United Bengal, perhaps we may say, of all India, that the arrest of Babu Surendranath Banerjea, the assault committed by the Police upon some

of the delegates at Barisal and the dispersal of the Conference by order of the District Superintendent of Police, constitute an affront to the entire Bengali nation, which is aggravated by the fact that it has all the appearance of having been premeditated and carefully planned beforehand. Intoxicated by the possession of autocratic power, emboldened by the security of his official position and actuated by motives which we can only characterize as vindictive, Sir Bampfylde Fuller has this time simply surpassed himself. His Honour wanted the popular leaders in Bengal to feel how his little finger was thicker than the loins of the Secretary of State, to say nothing of smaller fry like the Viceroy, and he has at last had the satisfaction of gratifying this darling wish of his heart. Babu Surendranath Banerjea and his compatriots had been, and still are, the most unsparing critics of the Administration of the new Province. In connection with the Rangpur Special Constables' case, the quartering of Gurkhas at Barisal, of the Punitive Police at Banaripara and Madhabpasa and of the Assam Police at Sirajgunge, the popular leaders had compelled Sir Bampfylde Fuller to climb down and cry *peccavi*, with a loss of dignity and *prestige* which would have driven a less callous Lieutenant-Governor to throw up his office. But the jingling of the guinea heals the heart that honour feels and His Honour Sir Bampfylde Fuller coolly pocketed all this humiliation and clung to his office-or rather to its emoluments-with limpet-like tenacity. But now he has had his score- perhaps the last he is destined to achieve, at any rate, in this country,

Must the nation sit still with folded hands and tamely submit to these high-handed proceedings of the lowminded despot of the wilds of Assam ? Are we so weak in our resources, so wanting in self-respect, as to bless the hand that has struck us and not hit back in return ? In times of unusual excitement, nations, like individuals, are apt to lose their heads and act with precipitancy and rashness. Let us not therefore be betrayed, in the heat of the movement, into any thoughtless act that may prejudice our cause. But we cannot take this, the last of a long series of affronts-"lying down."

Think of our leader, our heroic and Heaven-sent leader, every waking moment of whose life is spent in the service of the country, being arrested like a common felon and marched to the court-house to be insulted by an unmannerly and ill-bred Magistrate. Think of that Martyred figure standing in the dock, up-right and erect, calm and collected, heedless of the storm that was raging around him. Think of

him as he stood there like Christ standing before the Pilate !

The bigots of the iron time have insulted him whom nations adore, the miraculous magician who has made the blind see, the dumb speak, the lame run, the dead bones in the valley instinct with the warm glow of life.

Transport yourself on the wings of imagination to that crowded street of the town of Barisal on that memorable day when the idol of the people was arrested by mercenary myrmidons slavishly obeying the mandate of a merciless autocrat and if you are a man, mentally register a vow to act as becomes a man.

Think of the Martyred delegates and their sufferings. They were strangers at Barisal and had attended the Conference at not a little personal inconvenience and sacrifice. They were all men of education and respectability and their patriotism and public spirit would do credit to any community. And they were all dragooned like pick-pockets by ruffianly policeman in the presence and under the orders of their European superior officers. A number of them have received more or less serious injuries. And what was the atrocious crime of which they had been guilty ? They had taken part in a procession for which it had been thought necessary to take out a license ! And the punishment was—blue eyes and broken heads. The recollection of this incident will rankle in the hearts of the nation till the chief culprits are punished for the days' work.

Think of the hardship and inconvenience to which were put the lady delegates and visitors who had to stand in the scorching sun for an unconscionably long time, awaiting the arrival of their conveyances, which was unnecessarily delayed by the admirable arrangements made by the police. All honour to those brave daughters of Bengal and may they be blessed with heroic sons and high-minded daughters !

The sky is overcast and stormy winds blow: Sail on, daring mariner and heed not the roaring, raging billows. For soon the sun will shine again and the tempest will be calmed. Why then should we be afraid of persecution ? Purified by sufferings and chastened by stern adversity, there will emerge a stronger tougher nation, daring to act or to perish in the attempt.

Unfurl high the Swadeshi flag and let it float triumphant in the eye of Heaven, to be borne by the firm hands of seventy millions to a certain and not-distant victory. That is the lesson of the Barisal barbarities—a lesson burnt into the brain of a exasperated nation.

15. An Editorial Note of *The Hindu*

The telegrams which we published to-day regarding the Barisal Provincial Conference make it clear that the administration of East Bengal has got into the hands of the men to whom it is nothing, if by their actions the British Empire in this country is brought into jeopardy. For some time past the instruments of Government in that Province have endeavoured by all means in their power to bring discredit upon the methods of British rule, and the results of their latest exploit show that they have probably surpassed their own expectations. The proceedings that have taken place show that by a preconceived design, Mr. Surendranath Banerjea has been subjected to a vindictive criminal prosecution, which was worked by confederacy between the Police and the Magistrate, whose strings were evidently pulled from above ; and a conviction illegal on the face of it has been obtained. By the same arbitrary and tyrannical methods a Conference of several thousand of respectable and loyal citizens of the Empire has been dispersed. There has been thus a defiance of law and authority of persons appointed to uphold them, and constitutional methods of agitation are sought to be trampled down by the irresponsible exercise of police force. The loyal subjects of His Majesty can no longer exercise the rights of citizenship of lawful agitation and constitutional demands of redress of grievances and rights which have been conferred on us by the laws of the British Empire and guaranteed to us by British traditions and pledges without bringing on ourselves the terrors of Criminal prosecution and without loss of personal liberty. We cannot but think that Russian administrative methods are becoming more and more the favourite tools of our administrators and the time-honoured British traditions of a free and constitutional Government are becoming discredited. What is the object that our rulers think that such methods are likely to subserve? Do they seriously think of cowing down people from exercising their lawful rights and making them submit to arbitrary and injurious decisions and measures of Government by restoring to such methods? Away with all such foolish delusions! Sir B. Fuller or Lord Minto is not the final arbitrator of India's destinies. Over them are the Houses of British Parliament, the British Electors, and the civilised nations of the world.' Anglo-Indian officials cannot for ever ride rough-shod over the Indian people ; and if foolish persons think so, they have entirely failed to understand the changed spirit of the people. The discontent

of Bengal is rapidly spreading to other parts of India, and the more the leaders of that province are harassed, persecuted and ill-treated, the greater is bound to be the exasperation of the public mind in other parts of the country. The arrest and conviction of Surendranath, the suppression of the Conference, and the general unlawfulness and prosecution of the administration in Bengal have created a unity of feeling which officials like Sir B. Fuller may not know or may not understand. The hearts of the Indian people in every part of the country beat at this moment in complete and sympathetic unison in response to the troubles of Bengal. It is absurd to imagine that the officials of India can for ever maintain that the cry of *Bande Mataram* is illegal under all circumstances. Or the right of public protest and public meeting can be prohibited for all time. The folly of Sir B. Fuller is simply incomprehensible. If he is foolish enough to believe that proceedings and orders that he has initiated or sanctioned during recent times can secure peace in his province or general acquiescence in the Partition of Bengal, then it is Lord Minto's duty to open his eyes and show him the folly of his ways. The only way to put an end to the present excitement is to send away on long leave the incompetent officer who has been the cause of all the recent troubles in Bengal. We are sorry that Lord Minto is not proving himself a strong ruler. The people of India look forward to a strong and liberal director of Government at the present juncture and we must say that we feel greatly disappointed. It looks as if Lord Minto is too weak to put down Fuller's Vagaris-then the people should appeal to Secretary of State for India to remove this bungling and tactless officer from a position which gives him power to cause enduring mischief by a needless irritation of the public mind, by a high-handed repression of public rights and by generally shaking public confidence in the professed principles and policies of British rule.

16. An Editorial Note of *The Indian Patriot*

For the first time in the history of British India a political gathering of the people have been rushed into by the Police armed with lathis, guns and bayonets, the heads of people have been broken and their leader has been outraged by arrest. The glory belongs to the New Province of Bengal, to its redoubtable ruler who has been, ever since

his appointment to that position, keeping up a sensation by his highhanded acts leading to violence and oppression. As our Calcutta telegram says Mr. Surendranath Banerjea was arrested by a European police officer while he, with others, was escorting the President of the Provincial Conference at Barisal. It is obvious that the outrage had been previously designed ; for the Police officer is said to have declared, according to one version, that his instruction was to arrest Mr. Surendranath Banerjea alone and not others, though men like Matilal Ghosh manfully offered themselves for arrest. From the nature of the event, and of the circumstances in which it took place, it may be easily conceived that the intelligence of it will be received in every part of India with the utmost surprise and indignation. People will find it hardly possible to believe in the reality of such an outrage under British rule. It is so foreign to British instincts, so obnoxious to British principles, and so antagonistic to English practice that one may wonder how such a thing could have been perpetrated except under the most idiotic impulse of irresponsible power. The aim of local authority was undoubtedly to humiliate Mr. Surendranath Banerjea, and through his humiliation, to teach a lesson to the people of Bengal. Has this aim been successful ? Could it ever have been successful ? Could ever a mad man have believed that Mr. Surendranath would be bowed down by the Police arrest, that the people who acknowledge him as their leader would be intimidated by this wanton outrage on him ? Is it not, on the other hand, clear to every sane man that a greater political blunder could not have been committed by any Government than the arrest of a popular leader like Mr. Banerjea who is indisputably a prophet both by his own province and in the rest of India? His arrest is not only an outrage upon himself but a wanton aggression on the feelings of the people of India. He is not guilty of any high crimes and misdemeanours ; he has not committed any act of disloyalty ; he has not even given expression to any disloyal sentiment. If he has infringed any rule of law he has done so with many others, with Mr. Matilal Ghosh, Mr. Chaudhuri and others. Was it necessary even for the vindication of any local rule or law to subject him of Police arrest ? These and many other questions will have to be answered by the ruler of East Bengal in other places and before other tribunals.

For the moment we can confine ourselves to the political aspect of this official crime: for we regard it as nothing less than a crime to introduce lathies into a peaceful political gathering, to break heads,

to arrest an honoured citizen, a popular leader. The entire people of India will regard it as such, while for Mr. Surendranath Banerjea himself, if we know the man aright, far from being intimidated by it, he would regard it as a triumph of his life, of the cause which he represents, of the principles of liberty which he swears by. His arrest has done for the political regeneration of India ten thousand times more than he could have achieved by his own efforts or influence. It will have quickened the political life of India, its sense of freedom and justice, in a manner that nothing but wanton violence to the deepest feelings of a whole people could do, and although Sir Joseph Fuller may for the moment glory in his great achievement, he will soon realise that he has done nothing else but illustrate his own tyrannical instincts and the insignificance of his power. For the rest he has done the utmost harm to the good name of British rule by seeking to stifle the instinct of liberty by means at once violent and discreditable. To the onlooker it has been sufficiently apparent that he has been riding for a fall; and the fall cannot be for distant when it is possible for an incensed public to point to an act so indefensible, and yet so deliberate. The advocates of the Presidential system of Government with a Governor and Council, will find hope and encouragement in the unrestrained recklessness of the local authorities of East Bengal. They will find sufficient justification for their position in the possibility, which has been demonstrated of an autocratic ruler acting without the ballast of a council, running headlong into the precipice of political insanity. They will be able to argue that three men acting conjointly cannot be capable of perpetrating a folly so egregious and so suicidal; and most people will be compelled to agree with them. Sir Joseph Fuller has thoroughly established his unfitness for the position in which he is placed. He has vindicated the popular verdict of condemnation of his rule. He has disproved Mr. Brodrick's faith in one man rule. And we should, indeed, be surprised if he were allowed much longer to outrage popular feeling and sentiment in the manner he has dared to do. He has done nothing to gain the attachment of the people to British rule, which is the primary duty of a British ruler. He has on the contrary alienated the feeling of millions for no other reason than that the people love their liberty and their rights, and are prepared to assert them.

Lord Minto has been extremely unfortunate in his lieutenant. His Lordship has done his best to support local authority, but there must be a limit even to his patience. For the good Government of India and

for the contentment of its people, His Excellency is responsible ; and it must cause him considerable pain to see his hopes of peaceful and considerate Government, of a *regime* of rest and respite following a period of ceaseless energy and disturbance of men's minds, being frustrated by the acts of his lieutenants. We are not only sorry for the Viceroy, but are concerned about the consequence which must necessarily result from the policy pursued in Bengal. Even the *Englishman*, we note in anxiety to avert a prolonged persistence in the course taken at Barisal. Our contemporary is naturally anxious that the folly must end where it has been started. We are in sympathy with this desire: but the best course that we can ask the *Englishman* itself is to take or to give up defence of Sir Joseph Fuller to admit that a grievous blunder has been committed, and to abstain from recriminations which cannot but embitter feeling between races. If, on the other hand, the English and Indian newspapers go on taking opposite sides, in a matter regarding which there can, and ought to be but one opinion, we anticipate an unfortunate revival of racial bitterness which does not at present prevail in Bengal itself, if at all, in a very mild form. We hope that the arrest of Mr. Surendranath Banerjea will be regarded as an event in itself, that it will be judged on its merits in accordance with common sense notions of freedom and fairness. For this wanton outrage on one of the foremost leaders of the people, those responsible must be made to answer ; there is no means of getting over it even by an appeal of imaginary differences between Hindus and Mahomedans in East Bengal, much less by Swadeshism and boycott. Mr. Banerjea has gained, the cause which he represents has gained, by what the authorities honestly intended to be a humiliation to him. The effect has been quite different from the intention and a further prosecution of their aims, if they have the courage to persist, will only end in their own humiliation and disgrace.

Fullerism Rampant

Following the intelligence of the arrest and prosecution and punishment of Mr. Surendranath Banerjea comes the no less startling news of the forcible dispersing of the Barisal Conference ; and after two such events the people of India will doubt whether they are living in a British ruled country. There seems no way of putting an end to un-British rule in East Bengal except by the instant removal of Sir Joseph Fuller from the seat of authority upon which and upon British

rule itself he has brought thorough discredit. Lord Minto will now be called upon to take his full share of responsibility which in connivance of the Fuller vagaries has precipitated. It is true that his Lordship could not foresee all the excesses which his erratic Lieutenant was capable of committing. But it is also true that for the indulgence which his Lordship showed, Sir Joseph Fuller would not have dared to commit the scandalous excesses which has made his rule of East Bengal notorious throughout India. We believe that nobody will seriously contend that for the doings in Barisal the District officials are alone responsible and that the Lieutenant-Governor has had no connection with them. We should be glad if this were so. But those like ourselves who have watched the course of events in East Bengal and Sir Joseph Fuller's share in each of them cannot make the mistake of fastening his enormities on the wrong shoulders. If there is one person who is capable of doing all that has been done in East Bengal it is precisely Sir Joseph Fuller. He is Lord Curzon's final gift to the Bengalees ; and if this barbarous way of revenging himself upon the Bengalees will soothe his feelings Sir Joseph Fuller will have earned the appreciation and gratitude of his patron. But if Lord Curzon be a patriotic Englishman, as we believe he is, and if he be jealous of the good name, the strength and security of the British Empire, he cannot but feel that he made one of the greatest mistakes of his life when he appointed this Civilian to the high office of Lieutenant-Governor.

Our duty, however, is clear on this critical occasion. We cannot, and should not look on the situation calmly. We have a duty to ourselves, to our country, and to our Sovereign and Government. No upstart like Sir John Fuller should be allowed to sully the fair name of British rule and make it stink in the nostrils of foreigners. Moreover, our position, status and rights as British subjects are threatened by the open violation of the freedom of public meeting and of public speech. If this be our fate, we shall come to know that it is not worth living under British rule. We cannot say whether it is Sir Joseph Fuller's intention to create such a feeling in the minds of the Indian people ; but if it was, he could not have proceeded in a better way to effect his purpose. The Government of India, feeling their responsibility and duty in a different way, may think it necessary to come to the rescue of an oppressed people. Whether they do so or not, our duty is clear. We must approach the Viceroy with our most solemn protest against the encroachment upon our liberties: and if he is powerless to come to our rescue we must

forthwith carry our appeal to our Sovereign and Parliament in the most effective way that is open to us. The leaders of India, we have no doubt, will realise the extreme gravity of the situation, and take common concerted action without a moment's delay.

17. An Editorial Note of the *Madras Standard*

The telegrams which we published elsewhere about recent events in Barisal afford painful reading. It appears that Mr. Surendranath Banerjea was arrested by the District Superintendent of Police, taken before the Magistrate and sentenced to pay a fine of Rs. 400., that some of the delegates were assaulted by the Police, and that the Conference was dispersed. We were aware that in the new Province of Eastern Bengal and Assam matters have taken an unfortunate turn, and that the blunders of Sir Bampfylde Fuller were least calculated to win the affection and attachment of the people, but, certainly, we were not prepared for news of such a sensational and regrettable character. If all that has taken place in Barisal since Saturday last be true, there can be no question whether that Sir Bampfylde has permitted his Government to go beyond its limits and attracted to himself a very large amount of unenviable attention. For very good reasons Barisal was chosen this year as the fittest place for the first Conference after the Partition to be held. The majority of the inhabitants of Barisal are Mahommedans. It is, we believe, the most Mahommedan district in the whole of the United Bengal. Since it was supposed that the agitation against the Partition was only the work of the Hindus, and that the Mahommedans are heartily in favour of it and have no sympathy with the agitators—did not the Nawab of Dacca the new representative of the new province say so in the supreme legislative Council?—it struck the leaders in Bengal that it would be a very happy thing to have the Conference in a Mahommedan District, and thereby show that the Partition is keenly resented both by Mahommedans and Hindus. Sir Bampfylde has recently been making some efforts in the direction, it appeared, of setting up the Mahommedans against the Hindus and appointing a few Mahommedans as Sub-Inspectors of Police. In a number of other ways also he has often endeavoured to show his contempt for public opinion and leaders of the people. Very few will recall his recent tour in Dacca, Sillong and Mymensingh without

occasionally realising that with the new Lieutenant-Governor un-British methods of administration have come into force. The Gurkhas have been quartered, the Punitive Police has been stationed, the Magistrates have been given what we are inclined to hold, a free license, meetings and processions have been prohibited, vakils and teachers suspected of Swadeshism have been, in a number of cases, insulted and needlessly harassed and threatened, and lastly small school boys have been arrested—quite recently a lad of fifteen was pounced upon at Midnapur by a posse of twelve constables and a Sub-Inspector in the dead of night—and in some cases whipped, fined and imprisoned. It is no doubt amusing that these tiny enemies of the mighty British-Empire should be arrested in such a sensational manner, but it is also equally true that Sir Bampfylde, without intending it apparently, has been gradually lowering the prestige and dignity of British administration in India. But this latest incident of the arrest of Bengal's most prominent leader and the dispersing of the Conference is one of that challenges all comparison. This is the first time that a Provincial Conference has been dispersed. It cannot be pretended that the Conference is a danger to public safety and that those who take part in it are irresponsible agitators whom Government must watch with suspicion and ready to hammer on all possible occasions. Sir Bampfylde cannot say that the Conference ever intended to do or did unlawful things or was calculated to disturb the peace of the locality. It was a highly educated and patriotic Mahomedan, a Barrister-at-law, who was selected to preside over the Conference.. And still none of these considerations seems to have had any effect in moderating the feverish activity of the Police or in sobering the judgment of the Magistrate. A most unfortunate blunder has been committed. Things have come to such a crisis that some decided action is now necessary. In the new Province constitutional Government is more or less absent. Are the people to submit themselves quietly, and without protest to the methods of administration which are manifestly un-British, and unwise? When a Provincial Conference presided over by a distinguished Mahomedan and attended by prominent men could be treated in this way? Who can assert with confidence that in incidents where single individuals are involved any justice or fair-play will be shown? The offence of Mr. Surendranath Banerjea is not clear. We have to wait for fuller reports. But in no case it be said of him that he is a dangerous agitator, a violator of law and procedure, and the leader

of riotous processions. Even 'Bande Mataram' seems to have not been sung in obedience to Government prohibition. Why was then this wanton outrage perpetrated ? If Sir B. Fuller think that such actions would frighten the people he is terribly mistaken. On the other hand, conscious of justice on their side and fully loyal to constituted authority they have become more united and more determined and more persistent in their demands. Even administrators like Lord Curzon and Sir Bampfylde serve a good purpose. They have made India more spirited and alive to her needs and defects. Sir Bampfylde's actions are mostly unconstitutional and are dangerous to the peace of the country. Lord Minto must soon put his foot down and Mr. Morley must not for one moment tolerate this kind of playing with the feelings of the people. Mr. Surendranath Banerjea's work lies more in England than in India. Let him stir up the conscience of the British people to the ways in which Sir Bampfylde is administering the new province.

18. An Editorial Note of the *Lahore Tribune*

Sunday was a busy and exciting day in Lahore. Meetings of various kinds relating to matters educational, religious, social and commercial were being held all over the city. Hindus, Mahommedans and Arya samajists were each of them having their annual gatherings, and by a curious confidence the Christians were also on that day celebrating their Easter. It was at a time when the people were so engrossed, each in the special matter he was interested in, that the excitement rose to the highest pitch on the receipt of the telegram published elsewhere announcing the arrest of Mr. Surendranath Banerjea at Barisal. Mr. Banerjea is a national asset. He belongs just as much to the Punjabee and the Madrassite, the Hindusthani and the Gujratee as to the Bengalee. By long years of devotion to the cause of the country he has won a place in the hearts of not only the Hindus in various parts of India but even of the bulk of the Mahommedans and of the Indian Christians. Even those who do not agree to the fullest extent with his political views do not hesitate to pay tribute to the patience, the untiring energy, the absolute unselfishness, the unrivalled powers of speech, and no less unique literary gifts with which he has at all times and on all occasions advocated the interests of the people of India. The arrest of such a man by Government, it is but natural, would create a ferment in the minds

of the people. Surprise, indignation, sorrow and sympathy were feeling which were curiously blended. But the uttermost feeling in our mind was an admiration for the tactics of Sir Bampfylde Fuller. Lacking though he is in the highest qualities of statesmanship he is at all events a hard but by no means scrupulous fighter. A few days ago we received a communication from a source in which we place the utmost reliance that there were good grounds for the belief that the question of the Partition of Bengal would very soon assume a new phase, and that Mr. Morley, the Secretary of State for India, was disposed to accept in a more or less modified form the proposals put forward by Sir Henry Cotton for the readjustment of the territories now included under the Governments of Bengal and the North Eastern Provinces. If there be the slightest foundation for the change of views in respect to the Partition attributed to Mr. Morley, we can easily realise that it would be received by the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Eastern Provinces with feelings in which indignation and disgust had the uppermost place. It was Lord Curzon who gave birth to the abortion called the Partition of Bengal but Sir Bampfylde Fuller is the foster-nurse. It is his feelings which will be luceruta if the infant is born from his arms. Can we wonder then at his going to any length to protect his nurseling ? The reconsideration by Mr. Morley of the Partition question may be frustrated if it was brought home to him that it would be attended with grave political consequences, that it would mean a practical surrender to those who have been at no pains to conceal the disaffection that this entirely uncalled for and unjustifiable measures is circulated to arouse. A State prosecution would be best adopted to divert the attention of the Secretary of State for India. A criminal conviction for sedition would be the most effective method of convincing this high official that the time is inopportune and the policy far from commendable that would disturb the present arrangement in any way, and that any step in this direction would at once be construed as a surrender to what it will be sought to demonstrate is a deliberate and organised attempt to force the hands of Government. That Mr. Surendranath Banerjea should be the person selected for prosecution is a tacit acknowledgement of the fact that he has been the loudest and the most persistent in the protests that have been made against a measure that has sorely wounded the feelings of the people of Bengal. The wonder is that no attempt was made to close his mouth before this.

The arrest of Mr. Surendranath Banerjea may also have been

actuated by another reason, which has for its basis the unrivalled powers possessed by him for impressing and moving an audience. One of the grounds on which Mr. Morley refused to reconsider the Partition question was that the agitation against it was subsiding and that things were quietly settling down. Such was the assurance he had no doubt received from the Government of India which it need hardly be said was a far from correct representation of the real facts. The agitation had never subsided or showed a tendency to subside and it was the fear that it would burst forth with a hundredfold vigour that may have led to the arrest of a man who in this respect was the most dangerous, as the lead given by him would have been implicitly followed by the people. Mr. Banerjea has had paid to him the highest compliment he has ever received in his life, for his arrest is a tribute to his commanding influence as a leader and an orator. He would no doubt have roused his audience at the Barisal Conference to the highest pitch of excitement and induced them, if ever they needed such inducement to solemnly resolve never to give up the agitation which they have carried on for so many months. This was a contingency which was as inevitable as it was likely to be distasteful to the Government, but it may be questioned whether the alternative adopted is not calculated to be attended by consequences far more serious. In the place of an excitement and commotion confined to one city, or at any rate to one province, the whole of India from one end to the other has been violently stirred. We are unable to recognise the wisdom of this policy, and it is difficult to believe that it has the approval of the Viceroy. His Lieutenant in the North-Eastern Provinces may be playing a game off his own hat. Who knows whether it is a final stroke on the part of one who is conscious he is about to be worsted ?

19. An Editorial Note of *The Daily Times*, Lahore

Surendranath Banerjea arrested ! such was the news that spread like wild-fire in Lahore on Sunday noon ; within an hour the intelligence was on everybody's lips. It was the one talk in clubs and festive gatherings of various assemblages that had come together in the capital of the Punjab. This was the one all-absorbing topic that drove away every other subject of interest, religious, social, moral or personal. Surendranath Banerjea, the idol of the nation, the leader of the Indian

people, was arrested, that was a sufficiently cruel destiny and no son of the motherland had any heart left for anything of this world or the next.

We laughed and we wept, we wept and we laughed, we rejoiced and we grieved, we grieved and we rejoiced—such was the maddening effect of the cruel blow that has befallen, the affection that has developed the whole Indian people. Surendranath Banerjea arrested—is what no one believes at the first communication of the news. Snrendranath, the hero of a thousand, aye, thousands of platforms, the recognised fighting leader of the constitutional party, the guide, philosopher and friend of the whole educated community, the Gladstone of India, taken to prison. The truest patriot, the staunchest leader, the greatest educationist, the most cultured statesman, the most eloquent orator, and, above all, the bravest journalist and constitutional fighter to be pounced upon by a Policeman—this was held an impossible feat, and imagination recoiled from the news. Yet it was too sad to be true, or too good to be false and it sank down in the hearts by its very gravity, its great impart.

Is it true ?—is the question asked every where. You cannot sit at home, or work in your office without being interrogated a hundred times in an hour, you cannot walk in the streets without meeting people at every step, repeat the same inquiry and hope perhaps, that it might turn out to be a hoax, but, no, it cannot be, and they know it in their heart of hearts. Yet the call for detailed facts is so urgent that wire after wire is being flashed to Barisal, the scene of the arrest, and a meeting of the citizens of Lahore assembles this evening, the 16th, to give expression to their heartfelt and deep sympathy with the immortal Surendranath and pray for strength for him.

And what is the grave and heinous offence for which the great Surendranath has been made to stand at the Bar of the British Courts and British Law? The facts so far known and which will be found elsewhere are that the Provincial Conference was going to hold its session at Barisal in the new Province on the 14th. Mr. A. Rasul, Barrister-at-Law, was being escorted to the conference pandal by Mr. Surendranath Banerjea, Babu Matilal Ghosh, and others. The procession was shouting *Bande Mataram*, which is, we believe, the legal birth-right of every Indian, and the inalienable privilege of every patriotic son of the motherland. The police took it into their hands to attack the assembled processionists with regulation lathies and one

or two heads are reported to have been broken. Later on the District Superintendent of Police arrested Babu Surendranath. Babu Matilal Ghosh and others offered to be arrested. But said the representation of the Police: "My orders are only to arrest Surendranath." The Fuller regime has crowned its reactionary policy by laying hands upon the nation's elect. The feeling its too deep for words, the occasion too sacred for tears. All is for the best, and the nation rejoices in Surendranath's suffering and sacrifice. May God be his strength !

20. An Editorial Note of *The Eastern Voice*

The further details of the Barisal incident disclose a lamentable state of things which makes one's hair stand on end. The actions of the Police in dispersing the Conference and the assault committed by them upon innocent delegates, the arrest of Babu Surendranath and his prosecution at the hands of an inexperienced autocrat and his underlings are alike unwarranted and unjustifiable. The greatest idol of the nation remained calm and unflinching when brought before the Magistrate to take his trial. With Christ-like fortitude Babu Surendranath bore persecution with admirable calmness. Not a finger was raised against the prosecutors who were callous to all rational feelings in the exercise of their brute force. The cause of Swadeshism has received a fresh impetus by the persecution of its martyrs. The Bengal Provincial Conference had been holding its sittings for the last fourteen years without any hitch, nor was there any sign of the breach of the peace. The law-abiding and peace loving character of the Indians generally are too well-known and the present occasion gave no grave cause for alarm or anxiety. The Police deliberately plunged themselves into a course of action that has no justification in the eyes of God and men. The authorities of the new Province have become mad with rage for reasons best known to themselves and their present thoughtless action has thrown the whole country into a state of wild excitement. We are men endowed with rational feelings, but the illegal and arbitrary actions of the authorities serve only to upset the normal condition of our life. There is a limit to one's patience but thanks to the even temper of our leaders who bore their fate with silence without thinking of resenting the wrongs done them. Their conscience is clear and they know not what terrible fate awaits their prosecutors before the Highest

Tribunal where there is no difference between black and white. No civilised Government can tolerate man's inhumanity to man. The Government of the new Province has committed the greatest administrative blunder. Tact, judgement and discretion should mark the actions of the powers that be and the slightest departure from any one these makes the position of the ruler ridiculous in the eyes of the world. The dismissal of the complaints of the aggrieved parties by the Magistrate furnishes an apt illustration of wanton disregard of law and enquiry which is not an uncommon thing in the Government of the new Province.

21. An Editorial Note of *The Indian Patriot* on 17. 4. 1906

The fierce attack by the Police on the unoffending delegates of the Barisal Conference and the arrest of Mr. Surendranath Banerjea are but the opening incident of the first scene of a drama which will be full of incidents and will take long to be fully enacted. The opening scene itself has caused the most intense excitement in the minds of near and distant spectators; it has, within twenty-four hours, convulsed the whole of India; and in a few days it may amaze Europe itself. If there is any spirit in the people of India, if there is any capacity in them to resent outrage and persecution, they will instantly take measures to put the official offenders on their defence. It will be for the latter to justify their acts. The burden of proof lies on them. The responsibility for the wrong is theirs. They have deliberately taken the offensive, have deliberately chosen their victim, have deliberately broken the heads of people, and have deliberately dispersed a representative gathering of the entire Province. After having done all those, they now seem to grow anxious about the consequences; and an official explanation has been sent forth from Barisal giving an air of innocence and justification to their action. The theory advanced by them is that the procession to the conference was started in order to test the validity of the Government orders. But everybody knows that a procession such as was rushed upon by the Police is a common feature of our Congress and Conference meetings; and the singing of "Bande Mataram" has been a familiar feature of the public life of Bengal. Competent legal opinion has expressed itself against the legality of the prohibition sought to be imposed by the local authorities; and even if the people

wanted to test it, a prosecution before the courts is the most proper and legitimate thing for the authorities to undertake. A conference assemblage or a procession proceeding to it is not an unlawful assembly. It is a legitimate gathering of respectable citizens who have a right to protect their heads from police violence, and their liberty of speech from Police interference. How are we to characterise an attack with *lathis* and bayonets upon a procession which was composed of such men as Mr. Surendranath Banerjea, Mr. Matilal Ghosh, the Hon'ble Bhupendranath Bose, the Hon'ble Mr. Choudhuri and other leading men of Bengal ? Could such a procession have been by any stretch of imagination, construed as an unlawful assembly but upon breaking the peace of the country ? Why then did the Police rush upon it, and why did they break so many heads ? We have no doubt that a competent Court of Law will be called upon to pronounce an opinion on this and other matters connected with the outrage ; and the local authorities will, indeed, be afforded greater opportunities of defence than Mr. Surendranath Banerjea was when he was convicted by the Magistrate.

The one question which we must ask them immediately to answer is, why was Mr. Surendranath Banerjea picked out for arrest, when there were so many others like him from Bengal ? He was a visitor and delegate to the Conference, and not one of its organisers. All arrangements in connection with these Conferences were made by the local people, not by outsiders. The latter were merely invited guests, but they accepted the hospitality of the local residents. As an invited guest, Mr. Surendranath Banerjea had no responsibility for the arrangement of the procession, for its order or accessories. If the chief offender was wanted for the purpose of the Police he ought to have been sought among the local organisers of the conference. The Chairman of the Reception Committee would have been a very proper person to be arrested from the point of view of the Police. The arrest of Mr. Surendranath Banerjea can have no other meaning than that an occasion was anxiously awaited to humiliate the foremost leader of the partition agitation in Bengal and that because the East Bengal authorities could not touch him in any other way, they utilised the occasion of the Conference within their jurisdiction to have their revenge upon him. That the act was premeditated is evidenced by the admission of the Superintendent of Police that his instruction was to arrest Mr. Surendranath Banerjea alone, and none else, though as we

have said, he was only one of the visitors of the Conference, and in no way responsible for its arrangements. The scheme was thus carefully planned to entrap the great political leader of Bengal, the moulder of Bengal public opinion, as Lord Curzon counted him. But have they succeeded in their aim ? The Police, indeed, arrested him; they hauled him up before the Magistrate ; the latter punished him without giving him even a hearing and without enabling him to examine his witnesses. To add to all this he also framed against him a charge of contempt of Court and punished him separately for it. But how was he received back by the people before whom he was sought to be humiliated ? With the wild's enthusiasm ! Is this an achievement for Sir Joseph Fuller to glory in ? Has he by his act drawn the peoples more to the Government of which he is the head ? Has he raised British administration , in the eyes of anybody by his reckless procedure ? The events of the future will give an answer to all these questions ; and we are content to await them.

The arrest of Mr. Surendrnath Banerjea, followed by the dispersing of the Conference, is a challenge thrown in the face of Indian people. It is a defiance to the present Liberal Government in England which, Sir Joseph Fuller knows well, would be the last to approve of such violent interference with the rights of Citizenship. No Government, whether Conservative or Liberal, could tolerate for a moment such un-British attacks upon the liberty of the subject as Sir Joseph Fuller has rendered himself guilty of and with a Liberal Government particularly, are associated ideas of justice and freedom which are the foundations of British rule. Yet the ruler of East Bengal has assumed that his power is irresistible before all the forces that may be arranged against him in India even before all the forces of Liberalism, even before the authority of His Majesty's Government which has in its keeping the destiny of millions subject to British rule. Sir Joseph Fuller would evidently laugh at Indian public opinion ; he would laugh at Mr. John Morley, and at the Government of which the latter is a member. He is Sista Khan himself, unrestrained by higher authority, freed from all constitutional restraint, and guided only by his own will and his own sense of propriety and wrong. It is by no means unlikely that he believes in his ability to carry out his will in doing wrong in spite of the checks which law and constitution impose upon every agent of the British Government and if this fact is in him, Lord Minto has certainly encouraged it by the certificate of approval which his Lodship gave

to his Lieutenant's doing in the new Province, without indeed, fully realising the extent of mischief which he is capable of. Sir Joseph Fuller has gone beyond all conceivable limits, conceivable by people accustomed to British rule ; he has created an enbrarrassing situation for Lord Minto's Government, for all who have hitherto supported him; and Parliament and the Secretary of State can no longer refuse to interfere, if they at all care to maintain British principle in the administration of India.

22. An Editorial Note of *The Madras Times*

If there was no fear of popular disturbance we cannot see why a procession should not be humoured as it would be in London, and the official defence that the procession was formed in order to test the validity of the Government order, though possibly absolutely correct, is not altogether to be admired for its wisdom. The agitation against the partition of Bengal was known to be dying its natural death, and Mr. Morley injudiciously said so in the House of Commons. This was too much for the Bengali leaders and they at once determined to have one last attempt to revive popular excitement, and with the assistance of over-zealous Government servants they have succeeded beyond their hopes. The Magistrate before whom the worshipped demagogue of the Bengali people was hailed, actually refused him a Chair. What more dramatic instance of Russian methods could be conceived.

Beside stopping the procession, it was going out of their way in uncompromising zeal for the Government officials to disperse the Conference too. And the cruelty of the manner of it! It was done in the heat of day when the delegates' carriages were absent and they had to walk out in the sunshine.

23. An Editorial Note of *The Punjabi* on 18. 4. 06

Elsewhere we give the contents of our Telegraphic Extracts published locally on Sunday last and yesterday from which they will come to know that a great outrage has been perpetrated by the authorities of Eastern Bengal on a great national leader. It is not only an outrage but an impudent insult directed against a national hero. It was a trumpery

affair from start to finish, and if it is Sri Bampfylde Fuller's Government—for we cannot conceive of the district officials at Barisal daring to interfere with the liberty of the people on a trumped-up excuse without orders from above—has shown to the world how fast it is assimilating its methods with those of the Trepoffs and Plahves so loudly execrated in Fleet Street. On Saturday at Barisal while Mr. Surendranath Banerjea and other leaders were escorting the President of the Provincial Conference to the Pandal singing between whiles the famous chorus *Bande Mataram*, the District Superintendent of Police pounced upon Mr. Banerjea and led him off in triumph, disregarding the request of his companions to be similarly treated as they were equally guilty (or not guilty) with him. At the Magistrate's Court Mr. Banerjea was treated with studied insult and neglect. He was not allowed legal assistance or even a seat in Court and when he protested the Magistrate treated it as a contempt of Court and summarily fined him Rs. 400 for it as well as the original offence whatever it was. The whole thing was over within an incredibly short time, and it forces one to the inevitable conclusion that the farce or travesty of justice, call it whatever you will, was carefully thought out and pre-arranged.

24. An Editorial Note of *The Lucknow Advocate*

All this has happened not in a badly governed Native State nor in any dominion under Asiatic rulers but in British territory, which had been governed on constitutional lines for over one century and a half. The responsibility of the incident cannot be placed on the D. S. P. or the District Magistrate alone. The whole affair was pre-arranged. The Magistrate desired to teach a lesson under orders from above to the Calcutta leaders and so he held his court even on a gazetted holiday. Now the offence of which Babu Surendranath Banerjea was charged was no offence according to the law of the land and he could not be arrested on that account. Sir Bampfylde Fuller had declared the reciting of *Bande Mataram* to be an offence. Sir Bampfylde Fuller is not a law unto himself and as such no subject of the King is bound to obey illegal order promulgated by any executive Government. Babu Surendranath and the entire Conference were within their rights to recite the songs which has not yet been declared by the legislature to be seditious. Even if it was within the competence of the Magistrate to prevent the

formation of a procession or the singing of certain songs on public streets, the procession which was led by Babu Surendranath Banerjee was not a procession in the sense in which the word has been used in the Police Act. Infliction of fine on an accused person for contempt of Court was an unheard of thing. But this has happened in a Province said to be within the regulation area. The whole thing was absurd from beginning to end. Sir Bampfylde Fuller by this blunder has simply strengthened the hands of the partitioned agitators and made their case stronger. He has brought discredit on the Government of his Province and it now lies between him and Lord Minto to decide whether he is competent to rule a Province. The matter of the fact is this. Sir B. Fuller had assured Lord Minto and His Excellency the Viceroy had assured the Parliament through Mr. Morley that the agitation against the Partition was dying. Mr. Morley had on this ground declined to re-open the question. But Sir B. Fuller soon found out his mistake. Instead of allowing the agitation to take its course he attempted to kill it by the adoption of violent measures, all of which were doomed to failure. If the agitation against partition was dying, then why all this excitement? Why should Russian methods be adopted to rule people who are said to be no more agitated? Why should the Magistrate assume the position of a middleman for the sale of Manchester piece-goods? Why should the police try to coerce people by assaulting the inoffensive among them? If the agitation had died, what should have brought people in thousands to receive Babu Surendranath and Calcutta leaders to get them on their way to Barisal? The agitation has not died; the foolish coercive measures adopted and the attempt made to suppress a genuine feeling will increase the unrest and discontent and create ill-will against the administration.

The Barisal incident cannot be treated as one confined to a town or the Province of East Bengal and Assam. It is an affair which affects the state of every Indian subject of King Edward and opens wider questions which must soon be settled. No human power can degrade Babu Surendranath in the estimation of his countrymen. Just one has to bring to his mind the spectacle of the D. S. P. arresting an elderly man like Babu Surendranath, an idol in his countrymen, affection and love, the D. S. P. desiring to take him to the Magistrate, and from there to goal, and yet respectable men had no felons beseeching the policemen to take them also to the Magistrate. This illegal arrest, this summary trial and this conviction and infliction of a heavy fine are

events which will, besides rousing indignations all over the country raise graver questions as to the methods which are to be used in the administration of the land.

Is India to be ruled by constitutional methods or by the caprices and whims of the executive ? If in Eastern Bengal liberty of speech, freedom of action and the procedure laid down by the statutes are to be set aside at the sweet will of one individual-let what be the position of the person-what guarantee is there that the same thing might not be done in other parts of India and thus one of the greatest guarantees for peace and order in the country taken away?

It is this aspect of the question which will create a feeling of dissatisfaction in all parts of India ; it will rouse feeling of dismay which it will be taken years to erase. Of course all constitutional methods will be adopted to see the great wrong done righted ; but beyond appeals and petitions something more is required and that is to keep up a vigorous agitation to make it impossible for the executive to set aside laws and to carry to proceedings which are likely to create insecurity and to encourage lawlessness. We look upon indiscriminate assault, arrest of young men in Bengal engaged in the Swadeshi movement and this arrest of Babu Surendranath as God-sends to condemn in the end of the responsible rulers of the Empire and the civilized world the system of bureaucratic Government which on the least excitement created by its blundering measures loses its head.

25. An Editorial Note of the '*Amrita Bazar Patrika* on 28. 4. 1906

* * * Because two urchins, who could never be traced out. threw one or two clods of earth towards the Magistrate's boat, a terrible punishment, in the shape of punitive police, was imposed upon the entire people of Banaripara and Norottampore, who were absolutely innocent, on the supposition that the so-called offending boys must have belonged to one of those villages. * * *

Of the many unarmed persons upon whom the heroic Barisal police committed cowardly assaults, four lodged formal complaints against the Police Superintendent, the Assistant Police Superintendent and some Constables before the Senior Dy. Magistrate. One of the complainants was no other than Babu Chittaranjan Guha Thakurata.

As the reader will remember, three brave Mussalman Constables, armed with deadly lathis, drove him, unarmed as he was, into a tank, and dealt at him blow after blow, even when he was about to be drowned. For every blow he received, he, however, cried *Bande Mataram*, and strange as it may sound, the cry gave him strength and courage to bear up with his sad plight. But for the interference of a Hindusthani Constable, who cried shame upon his three ruffianly comrades, the young man would have been killed outright. Every Bengalee ought to be proud of Chittaranjan who is the son of a well-known countryman of ours, Babu Manoranjan Guha Thakurta of Banaripara, for, he was the real hero of Barisal Conference, and not our esteemed friend Babu Surendranath who was arrested, or his companion, who was not arrested though he sought the honour, for they did not receive a scratch on their person. * * *

If policemen are used as lawless lathials of old by District Magistrates, and all their rascally acts are condoned, the country is bound to be turned upside down and the Government will see spectre in every bush. By encouraging the policemen to trample down the rights of the people and shutting up the courts of justice against the latter, the authorities are only sowing seeds for future trouble. We do not blame Mr. Emerson at all. He is only carrying out a deep-laid policy of the Curzon Government, of which Sir B. Fuller is the living representative.

26. Poem Published in *The Telegraph* on 17. 4. 1906

Barisal Provincial Conference

Barisal! Oh Barisal!
 City of woes, dauntless ever.
 Thou hast heard a Nation's call
 'Spite of Gurkhas, 'Spite of Fuller'.

Barisal! home of martyrs
 Land of patriots, fearing no Jack.
 Delegates gather heedless of Tartars
 'Spite of Vas' and 'Spite of Jack'.

Barisal! most cherished son
Of the Mother! Noble Scion
Of our race. Heed not Emerson
'Spite of Cargill', 'Spite of Lyon'.

H. C. B.

Bengal Provincial Conferences

Year	Place	President
1888	Calcutta	Mahendralal Sarkar
1889	"	Pearymohan Mukherjee
1890	"	Pringle Kennedy
1891	"	Rev A Paton Begg
1892	"	Baikunthanath Sen
1893	No Session	
1894	Calcutta	Narendranath Sen
1895	Berhampur	Anandamohan Bose
1896	Krishnagar	Guruprasad Sen
1897	Natore	Satyendranath Tagore
1898	Dacca	Kalicharan Bandyopadhyay
1899	Burdwan	Ambikahcharan Majumdar
1900	Bhagalpur	Binaykrishna Deb
1901	Midnapore	Nagendranath Ghosh
1902	No Session	
1903	Berhampur	Jagadindranath Ray
1904	Burdwan	Ashutosh Chaudhuri
1905	Mymensingh	Bhupendranath Bose
1906	Barisal	Abdul Rasul
1907	Berhampur	Dipnarain Singh
1908	Pabna	Rabindranath Tagore
1909	Hooghly	Baikunthanath Sen
1910	Calcutta	Ambikacharan Majumdar
1911	Faridpur	Jatinndranath Chaudhuri
1912	Chittagong	Abdul Rasul
1913	Dacca	Aswinikumar Datta
1914	Comilla	Byomkes Chakravarti
1915	Krishnanagar	Matilal Ghosh
1916	No Session	
1917	Calcutta	Chittaranjan Das
1918	Hooghly	Akhilchandra Datta

1918	Calcutta (special)	Kaminikumar Chanda
1919	Mymensingh	Jatramohan Sen
1920	Midnapore	A K Fazlal Haque
1921	Barisal	Bipinchandra Pal
1922	Chittagong	Basanti Debi
1923	Jessore	Syamsundar Chakrabarti
1924	Sirajgung	M. M Akram Khan
1925	Faridpur	Chittaranjan Das
1926	Krishnagar	Birendranath Sasmal
1927	Maju (Howrah)	Jogendranath Chakravarti
1928	Basirhat	Jatindramohan Sengupta
1929	Rangpur	Subhashchandra Bose
1930	Rajshahi	Bipinbihari Ganguli
1931	Berhempur	Haradaya Nag
1932-34	No Session	
1935	Dinajpur	Indranarayan Sen
1936-35	No Session	
1938	Bishnupur	Jatindramohan Roy
1939	Jalpaiguri	Saratchandra Bose
1940	Dacca	Jyotishchandra Ghosh

